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The Messages of the Bible

EDITED BY

Professor FRANK K. SANDERS, Ph.D., of Yale University, and
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VOLUME XII

THE MESSAGES OF THE APOSTLES

The Messages of the Bible

THE MESSAGES OF THE APOSTLES

THE APOSTOLIC DISCOURSES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS AND THE GENERAL AND PASTORAL EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, ANALYZED, AND FREELY RENDERED IN PARAPHRASE

BY

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PREFACE

The present volume includes the apostolic discourses contained in the earlier chapters of Acts and the Epistles of James, First Peter, Jude, Second Peter, First Timothy, Titus, Second Timothy, Hebrews, First, Second, and Third John, in the order named. The dates of many of these books are uncertain, and no order can claim to be more than approximately chronological. In general, however, the sermons from Acts, the Epistle of James, and the First Epistle of Peter may be said to represent the earlier forms and stages of Christian teaching, while Epistles like Hebrews and First John belong to its later period. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are included in this volume, partly because so many scholars doubt their Pauline authorship in their present form and, especially, because in any case they reflect the work of Timothy and Titus in ecclesiastical administration more than the theology of the apostle. The first ten Epistles of Paul, reproduced in "The Messages of Paul," present to us the apostle's doctrinal system. The Pastorals, whatever view be taken of their authorship, have little bearing upon that system, but deal with relations and conditions which more appropriately place them in the later group of New Testament writings.

The same method of treatment has been adopted as in "The Messages of Paul." The general facts which one

should know in order to appreciate the writings comprised in the volume are stated in the Introduction. This is followed by an account of the conditions and problems of the early church which, it is hoped, will throw light upon the messages of the apostles, especially upon the apostolic discourses. Then, to each of the Epistles is prefixed a brief special introduction explaining the nature and aim of the book, with comments on the critical questions which it suggests. Those who wish to read more extensively on these questions are referred to the list of books of reference given in the Appendix.

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I

THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

The earliest manual of church history, the Book of Acts, opens with a picture of the first congregation of believers at Jerusalem. Their place of meeting was an upper room and their number may be approximately estimated from the fact that when Matthias was appointed an apostle to take the place of Judas, the number present was about one hundred and twenty (Acts 1 : 15).

At the feast of Pentecost, a few days after Jesus' departure, occurred a signal realization of the promise of the Spirit in the confirmation of the faith of the disciples, and in the increase of their number. In his sermon on this occasion Peter convincingly maintained the Messiahship of Jesus. He asserted that the facts of his resurrection and ascension were in fulfilment of Old Testament predictions, and that it was the immediate duty of the Jewish people to repent of their sins and to believe on Jesus as their promised Saviour. About three thousand souls of many nationalities received the word and were added to

the church (Acts 2 : 41). The occasion inaugurated a new epoch in the life of the community, not only because it gave new courage and hope to the first disciples, but also because the conversion of so large a number of persons residing outside Palestine was a promise of the extension of the gospel to the whole world for which it was destined.

There is no reason to believe that the primitive church at Jerusalem had any formal organization. Its life was extremely simple. The apostles were, of course, its natural leaders, and Peter is represented as the spokesman of the assembly. At first the little company, many of whom were not residents of the city, seem to have dwelt together (Acts 1 : 13), but that arrangement must very soon have become impracticable on account of the growth of the community. They frequently met together for "the breaking of bread" (Acts 1 : 14 ; 2 : 42, 46), that is, for the celebration of the Lord's supper in the form of a common meal. When their number became large they probably met in groups in private dwellings, thus forming the churches or assemblies in houses, to which Paul refers as existing elsewhere (1 Cor. 16 : 19; Rom. 16 : 5 ; Col. 4 : 15).

These early Christians regarded whatever property they possessed as a means whereby they might serve their fellow-believers. "Not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common" (Acts 4 : 32). From such expressions

as this, taken by themselves, it would appear that the believers relinquished their private property entirely and contributed it to a common fund; but from other indications it seems unlikely that the community of goods was carried thus far. Ananias might have retained the full price of his possessions without offence (Acts 5 : 4). Mary, the mother of Mark, retained her own house in Jerusalem (Acts 12 : 12). Moreover, we hear nothing of a community of goods in the New Testament outside of the early chapters of Acts. The probability therefore is that each held his property at the service of his brethren, contributing it from generosity and love to their relief in the degree in which the circumstances seemed to him to require. Special mention is made of the beneficence of Barnabas, who sold a field and contributed the entire sum received to the common fund (Acts 4 : 36, 37).

It is in connection with these efforts to relieve the needy that we find the beginnings of church organization. The Greek-speaking Jews in the community complained that "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 6 : 1). Whether this neglect was intentional or not we do not know. In any case the time had come for an official administration of the alms of the church. The apostles had in hand the arduous work of preaching, and of teaching the growing community, and could not "forsake the word of God and serve tables" (Acts 6 : 2). Accordingly, a committee of seven almoners was ap-

pointed to attend to the work of distributing alms. It is noticeable that the Greek names of most of these men show them to have been chosen chiefly from the ranks of the Hellenists, who had made the complaint. This committee, whose origin was due to a practical necessity, was, no doubt, the germ of the later office of deacon.

The difficulties by which the Jerusalem church was surrounded were very great. The religious leaders and the more influential classes were opposed to the new "sect," and their hostility was sure to increase with its growth and success. The new doctrine was gaining ground with the people, and from the beginning it was true, as afterward, that there was "no small stir concerning the Way" (Acts 19 : 23), as Christian belief and practice soon came to be called. The Christians were chiefly from the humbler classes. What were they to face the learning, the influence, and the social prestige of the ruling classes in the nation? All the power of tradition, of rabbinic learning, of political advantage, was arrayed against them. Their hero was regarded as a malefactor who had met his just fate upon the ignominious cross. Their claim that he was the Messiah was contrary to the accepted interpretation of the Old Testament and abhorrent to every instinct of Jewish pride and every aspiration of Jewish hope. Amid these conditions the early Christians in their poverty and weakness braved the contempt and persecution of their countrymen, met them on the

field of Old Testament interpretation and history, and challenged them to deny the central fact on which they based their whole contention, that Jesus had been proven to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. With living conviction and confident hope the Christian community faced the issue, matching against the authority, influence, and number of their antagonists simply the power of truth and fact.

Despite formidable opposition the infant church continued to grow. The Jewish leaders could neither refute the arguments nor deny the miracles of the apostles. The threats of the priests could not intimidate them (Acts 4 : 17 ff.). With confidence the believers committed themselves to the care of God and prayed for courage to speak the truth with all boldness (Acts 4 : 24-30). As time went on and the hostility of the scribes, rulers, and priests increased in bitterness, the church found a double protection, first in the favor of the common people (Acts 4 : 21 ; 5 : 13), and, second, in the refusal of the Roman authorities to sanction the cruel attacks planned by the Jewish leaders (Acts 19 : 35-41 ; 22 : 22-29). Even among the Jews themselves there were more reasonable men, such as Gamaliel, who counselled moderation in the treatment of the Christians, in the conviction, no doubt, that the cause which they represented would die of itself, if left alone (Acts 5 : 34-42).

It need hardly be said that the Jerusalem church was

distinctly Jewish. Its members were Jews by birth and training. They shared, in great measure, the limitations of view which were common to their people. It therefore becomes an interesting question whether they contemplated the extension of the gospel beyond Judaism. That there are traces of this larger view in the church of the first days cannot reasonably be doubted. Peter says that the promise is to "those that are afar off," as well as to those that are nigh, that is, to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews (Acts 2 : 39). He sees in the outpouring of the Spirit upon men "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2 : 5) the fulfilment of the prophet's words that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2 : 21). He knows that it was the divine purpose to bless "all the families of the earth" through the Jewish nation (Acts 3 : 25). These indications of a consciousness that the gospel was for all men are confirmed by the conversion, under the labors of the primitive apostles, of the Ethiopian chamberlain (Acts 8 : 26 ff.), of Cornelius (Acts 10 : 1 ff.), and of many other Gentiles (Acts 10 · 45), and by the explicit assertion of Paul that the primitive apostles approved his mission to the heathen, and that Peter himself commonly recognized Gentile converts as Christian brethren and associated with them without scruple (Gal. 2 : 9, 12). The question among the early Christians was not whether the Gentiles might receive the gospel, but, whether they might be

saved without being circumcised and obeying the Jewish law. There were those who held that the observance of the Mosaic law was necessary to salvation (Acts 15 : 1). The apostles themselves did not go to this extreme, but the question is a puzzling one and their conduct was not always consistent with the truth of a universal gospel. For his inconsistency in withdrawing from the company of the Gentile converts at Antioch in deference to the ideas of certain Jewish Christians, Paul severely rebuked Peter, solemnly charging him to "walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2 : 11 ff.).

II

THE LEADING CHARACTERISTICS OF JEWISH CHRISTIANITY

It was natural that the first Christians, reared and trained in the Jewish religion, should be strongly attached to its beliefs and practices. It was well that there was no sudden break with Judaism. The religion of the Jews was the preparation and basis for the religion of Christ. The Messianic salvation was from the Jews (John 4 : 22); that is, it was through Jewish history that the way was especially prepared for the Messiah's coming. But while the attachment of the early disciples to Judaism had its

good side, it also had its dangers. It was not easy for them to hold fast the essentials of truth common to Judaism and Christianity, and to allow outworn beliefs and rites to fall away and be forgotten. Trained in a system of traditions and ceremonies to which the greatest importance had been attached, the first believers could not readily separate the wheat from the chaff. Accustomed to habits of thought to which a ritualistic system gives rise, they found it hard to pass to an appreciation of the spiritual teaching of Jesus. "No man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, the old is good" (Luke 5 : 39).

Religious beliefs and practices, once fixed and adopted, always have an immense power of self-assertion and self-preservation. An intense conservatism, moreover, was characteristic of the Jewish mind, especially during the two or three centuries preceding Christ's coming. It was the period of Israel's decline; the canon of Scripture had been closed; the prophetic age was over; religious beliefs had been authoritatively defined; the ritual had been elaborated in great detail; tradition reigned supreme. It was the age of the scribe and the priest. Incapable of search for new truth and impervious to its reception, the religious leaders of the people occupied themselves with ingenious applications of the letter of Scripture and in the perfunctory performance of religious ceremonies. It seemed a barren soil in which to plant the seeds of a gospel which was destined to change the world.

One of the most marked characteristics of Judaism was what is called "particularism;" that is, the tendency to regard the Jews as the special favorites of heaven and to suppose that all other peoples were outside the pale of God's mercy or interest. This narrow view arose from a false interpretation of the divine calling of Israel. The true meaning of the nation's election was that the Jewish people, as the recipients of revelation, should be the medium of the divine mercy to the world. But the people regarded God's favor as destined for themselves alone and as terminating on their own happiness and salvation. This idea of Israel's election meets us frequently in the pages of the New Testament. It was against this misconception that the apostle Paul protested in his great argument to show that God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, and that the "chosen people," if they are faithless and disobedient, will forfeit the favor of God (Rom. 11 : 20-22).

The Jews were characterized by a strong attachment to religious ceremonies, especially the rite of circumcision. It was this rite which marked this people off from the surrounding nations; it was the badge of their separateness from the world and the pledge of their consecration to Jehovah. But, as so often happens in the case of religious ceremonies, its higher meaning was obscured, if not wholly lost, in the later Judaism. Instead of being regarded as a pledge of obedience and faithfulness to God,

it was viewed as a guaranty of his special and exclusive favor. The people interpreted circumcision as evidence that God's grace was pledged to them and that the divine promises to Israel would be fulfilled irrespective of the conduct of the nation. It was thus easy to fall into carelessness and indifference respecting those conditions on which alone God can grant his spiritual mercies to men. In this way Jewish ritualism became a mere outward form of godliness. Religion degenerated into a superstitious dependence upon outward rites from which the power of living conviction and sincere consecration had departed. The official representatives of this ritualism were the most determined opponents of Christ and his gospel.

Another peculiarity of Jewish religious thought was legalism. God was, above all things, the Lawgiver. He had prescribed all the duties of life in a great system of commandments and prohibitions. To observe these was to win his favor, and to attain temporal and eternal blessedness. The relation of mankind to God was conceived as a legal, rather than as an ethical and personal, relation. Popular tradition had so elaborated the laws contained in Scripture that all life consisted in a round of observances and performances by which the devotee hoped to win the approval of God and the reward of perfect obedience.

These facts are of importance to the student of the New Testament, because the ideas and tendencies of which we have been speaking were carried over into early

Christianity and must be taken into account in the effort to understand and interpret many New Testament books. Every reader of the gospels knows how often our Lord came into conflict with the scribes and priests—the religious and theological teachers of his time. Their emphasis upon outward ceremonies, their adherence to human tradition, their maintenance of superficial distinctions to the neglect of great moral principles, were among the points in which his teaching and life stood in irreconcilable contrast with theirs.

In the Acts and epistles this contrast between Judaism and the gospel comes constantly into view. Against the idea that God was primarily to be thought of as a Law-giver issuing rules and commandments, the gospel taught that he was to be regarded as a Father. In contrast to the popular view that religion consisted in outward deeds, Christianity taught that it consisted in a certain state of the heart, in a God-like life. To the question: What shall I do to inherit eternal life? which Judaism had answered by prescribing legal obedience, Christ and his apostles answered by enjoining love to God and man, and trust in the grace of the heavenly Father. These were great and far-reaching differences. They made it impossible for the advocates of the two systems to dwell together in peace. They were influenced by different motives and rested upon different principles. For a time men might attempt to reconcile the two points of view, but they were,

as Paul so clearly showed, inherently inconsistent and must lead to separation.

The political conception of the Messiah and of his kingdom, current in Judaism, was one of the principal obstacles in the Jewish mind to the acceptance of Jesus, who founded no party, led no uprising, and refused to draw the sword. It was no easy task for the first believers to break away from the lower conceptions of Christ's work in which they had grown up and to adopt the notions of a spiritual king and kingdom and of salvation by sacrifice.

The principal illustrations of the survival in early Jewish Christianity of the peculiarities which have been enumerated will be found (so far as the portions of the New Testament included in this volume are concerned) in the difficulty with which Peter and his associates were brought to see that "God is no respecter of persons," and that the terms of salvation are the same for Jews and Greeks; in the persistency with which the Hebrew Christians clung to the Jewish ritual, as depicted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in certain echoes of false teaching and bitter opposition to the gospel which we hear in both the Pastoral and the Catholic Epistles.

III

THE EARLIEST CONFLICTS OF CHRISTIANITY WITH HEATHENISM

The earliest opposition to Christianity came, as we have seen, from Judaism (Acts 4 : 1, 17). The almoner Stephen was the first victim of this cruel and implacable hostility (Acts 7 : 59). When Saul was converted and began to proclaim the Messiahship of Jesus in the synagogues, he at once became the object of a murderous plot. He escaped death only by the vigilance of his friends, who lowered him outside the wall of Damascus at night in a basket (Acts 9 : 25). Wherever the apostles went, mobs were excited against them. At Lystra the Jews stoned Paul and dragged him from the city, supposing him to be dead (Acts 14 : 19). Paul and Silas were driven from Thessalonica by a rabble who pursued them even to Berœa (Acts 17 : 10, 13). Their preaching in the Jewish synagogues was everywhere the signal for an uproar. Such treatment was sure to precipitate a crisis. At Antioch Paul and Barnabas had been compelled to acknowledge that further efforts on behalf of the Jews seemed useless. "It was necessary," they said, "that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13 : 46).

Again, when at Corinth, Paul, Silas, and Timothy sought to use the freedom of the synagogue for preaching Christ, and were only met by opposition and blasphemy (Acts 18 : 6), the apostle cried: "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clear; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." These events were turning-points in the apostle's career and in the progress of the gospel. They marked the increasing hopelessness of converting the Jewish people to belief in Jesus as the Messiah and opened the way to the great and successful work of Gentile missions.

But how would the preachers and their message fare at the hands of the heathen? At Athens the curious and light-minded Greeks had heard their message with mingled incredulity and contempt (Acts 17 : 32). Was this an augury of the future? Or was the successful mission which had been established at Antioch (Acts 11 : 20), in which many Gentiles had gladly received the word of God (Acts 13 : 47, 48), to be regarded as a prophecy of the reception which awaited the preaching of the gospel among the heathen? In some critical instances the Roman power had refused to lend its sanction to the murderous plots of the Jews, and had even thrown its sheltering arm over the persecuted "sect." Was this an assurance that the great empire was destined to be an ally of the gospel?

If we carefully read the history of the earliest missions

to the Gentiles we observe indications that the course of Christianity in the heathen world was not to be a smooth one. The differences, both doctrinal and practical, between Christianity and the religions of Greece and Rome were deep and wide. Christianity knew but one God, heathenism had "gods many and lords many" (1 Cor. 8 : 5); the gospel proclaimed salvation through Christ, heathenism sought the favor of heaven through sacrifices, oracles, and auguries; the religion of Christ required a pure life, the heathen religion tolerated and even encouraged many corrupting practices and revolting vices. Sooner or later the gospel must come into decisive conflict with the superstitions of these idolatrous systems. There could be no compromise between them.

The history of this conflict falls mainly outside of the New Testament period, but its beginnings are already traceable there. It is noticeable that the clash generally came at the point where the work of the apostles affected unfavorably the selfish interests of the heathen. The superstitions of the Græco-Roman world provided occupation for a horde of sorcerers, soothsayers, and image-makers whose pockets would quickly feel the effect of a work like that of the apostles. Long before the day of Gentile missions, Philip had encountered the magician Simon in Samaria (Acts 8 : 9). At Paphos, on the first missionary tour, the Jewish sorcerer Elymas opposed the work of Barnabas and Saul and sought to turn aside from the faith

the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13 : 8). When Paul crossed into Europe on the second missionary tour, he quickly found that the interests which were fostered by heathen superstition would not be indifferent to his work. At Philippi, the first European city in which Paul and his companions preached, the cure of a soothsayer who "brought her masters much gain" by the practice of her art, occasioned their arrest, chastisement with rods, and imprisonment (Acts 16 : 16 ff.). But the apparent defeat issued in victory, for not only was the jailer who guarded them converted, but the magistrates were forced to the verge of apology when they learned that Paul and Silas were Romans, and besought them to go quietly from the city (Acts 16 : 38, 39). At Athens Paul's preaching was received, not, indeed, with threats and violence, but with the cynical indifference and undisguised contempt which it was quite as hard to bear (Acts 17 : 32). At Ephesus the apostle encountered heathen superstition in its most inveterate forms. There exorcists and necromancers in great numbers plied their profitable trade. Yet in his campaign against them the apostle was highly successful. Many of them brought the books in which the rules of their magic were written and, publicly burning them, renounced their "curious arts" (Acts 19 : 19).

An incident occurred at this time which occasioned "no small stir concerning the Way" (Acts 19 : 23). At Ephesus there was a shrine-maker, Demetrius, who conducted a

profitable business in making images of the goddess Diana. He was quick to discern the unfavorable effect of Paul's work upon the occupation of shrine-making. He loudly declared that the whole traffic was in peril and that the divinity herself was being "deposed from her magnificence" by this opponent of idol-worship. A tremendous excitement followed and a mob was created. Paul would quite certainly have lost his life had it not been for the intervention of the Roman official, who not only reminded the excited populace that if they had charges to prefer against the preachers, they could do so before the courts, but also gave them the very quieting suggestion that the Roman authorities would probably inquire after the instigators of the uprising (Acts 19 : 38, 40). At this intimation the crowd seems to have melted away, and Paul was once more "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. 4 : 17).

After his missionary tours, when he returned to Jerusalem, Paul was again beset by enemies who had followed him from proconsular Asia. All Jerusalem was thrown into confusion, the apostle was beaten and would have been killed had he not asserted his rights as a Roman citizen to a regular legal trial (Acts 22 : 25-29). Being transferred to Cæsarea (Acts 23 : 23), he was examined before Felix (Acts 24) and Festus (Acts 25), and, at length —after abandoning all hope of obtaining justice at the hands of these men—he appealed to Cæsar (Acts 25 : 11). Then followed his stormy voyage to Rome (Acts 27, 28)

and the history abruptly ends. Here tradition takes up the story and assures us that Paul was tried and released, and then tried again and condemned to death, and that he perished beside the Ostian road, near the place where now stands the splendid Basilica which bears his name. Peter is also said to have died a martyr at Rome.

This history of Christianity's early conflicts with heathenism is only a sketch, but it is enough to reveal to us the patience, courage, and faith of those who, like Paul, perished in the cause to which they had consecrated their lives. To the sufferings which discipleship to Christ entailed, the New Testament bears ample witness. The Epistles of Paul, of James, and of Peter are addressed to those who, in various parts of the world, are suffering hardships for the sake of Christ, and the Apocalypse is a lurid picture of the sufferings of the church under the cruelties of Rome. Alike from Jews and heathens the early Christians must "endure hardships." The reader will observe to what an extent, in the epistles included in this volume, the aim of the writers is to encourage the believers to whom they wrote to be brave and patient under persecution. Over the picture of the early church falls this dark shadow of sorrow and suffering, reminding us of the sketch which Paul has left us of his own experience: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a day and a night have I been in

the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11 : 24-27). And, yet, he could call all this "light affliction" when he thought of "the eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4 : 17) which shall be the reward of the faithful servant of Christ.

IV

THE ANONYMOUS AND DISPUTED BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The first books to receive a canonical, that is, a recognized authoritative character in the church were the four Gospels. This was the natural result of the high estimate in which the teaching and acts of Jesus were held. In these the church saw the supreme revelation of God. Hence the books in which the Lord's words and deeds were recorded were deemed of exceptional value, both for the instruction of believers and for the refutation of false teaching. Next in order of importance stood a second group of writings, including the thirteen Pauline letters, 1 Peter, 1 John, and the Book of Acts. As the canon of

the Lord's words had gradually assumed an authoritative character similar to that which was attributed to the Old Testament, so the canon of undisputed apostolic writings and of apostolic history gradually took rank with the Gospels as sources for the trustworthy knowledge of primitive Christian teaching. This second group of books was especially adapted to do service in the refutation of the doctrinal errors which from a variety of heathen and Jewish sources invaded the early church.

The formation of the canon was a long and slow process, and precise dates cannot be assigned to its various stages. In general, however, it may be confidently stated that the canon of the Gospel was fixed during the first half, and the larger canon, including the undisputed apostolic books, within the second half, of the second century.

Now, in addition to the twenty books already mentioned, there was a third group of writings which were called the Antilegomena, or disputed books. These were: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Jude, 2 and 3 John, and (in the East) the Apocalypse. These were books whose apostolic authorship and authority were regarded as questionable, and which, therefore, held a doubtful position and were generally regarded as of secondary importance. They were accepted and read by some churches, and not by others. By some Christians they were read as edifying, but not as authoritative books. We know that other books which, finally, did not obtain a permanent place in

the canon occupied, for a time, a similar position — for example, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. In some instances the Eastern churches differed from the Western in their attitude toward disputed books —for example the Book of Revelation was generally accepted in the West, while it was questioned or rejected in the East; the reverse was the case with the Epistle to the Hebrews. Not until the fourth century can these questions concerning the disputed books be said to have been put to rest. Toward this result the great theologian Athanasius exercised a powerful influence. Finally, the ecclesiastical councils of Laodicea (A.D. 363) and Carthage (A.D. 397) adopted as the authoritative standards of Christian teaching the twenty-seven books which now compose our New Testament.

From this historical sketch it is evident that the early church gave long and earnest attention to questions concerning its earliest traditions and the trustworthiness of the books which purported to contain primitive Christian teaching. By applying a variety of tests to the various writings which made claims to consideration it sought to "prove all things and to hold fast that which is good." Some of these tests were: historical trustworthiness, apostolicity, and actual usefulness for edification. The task of determining what books were entitled to the rank of original documents of the Christian religion was no easy one. Some of these books were anonymous, as, for

example, the Epistle to the Hebrews. Others bore a familiar name, as James and Jude, but furnished no other important indication respecting the personality of the author. One book among the Antilegomena, 2 Peter, claimed to be the work of an apostle, but in its character and contents presented so many serious difficulties to the acceptance of its apostolic authorship that even as late as the third century we find it more widely rejected than accepted.

This process by which the collection of sacred books was formed seems altogether natural when the circumstances of the early church are considered. At first, while the memory of the Lord's words and deeds were fresh in the minds of all, the believing community would feel no need of any canonical books except those of the Old Testament. Only when the first generation of believers was dying out would it be thought necessary to compose written narratives of the events of Jesus's life and teaching. Had the church felt this necessity earlier, perhaps a much fuller account of our Lord's life would have been preserved to us. Again, the New Testament epistles were all occasional writings. Their authors wrote them to meet some particular need and had no idea in so doing of contributing to a permanent collection of authoritative books. Had the authors of these letters foreseen the use which was to be made of their writings during many centuries of Christian history, they would probably

have supplied us with much information concerning themselves and their readers which is now wanting and the lack of which gives rise to many unsolved, and often insoluble, problems. How very little can we know with any certainty concerning the writers and original readers of the third group of books which were almost as much "disputed" in the early church as they are among scholars to-day. In the absence of specific information, either from the writings themselves or from other sources, we are left to construct as best we may a historical situation into which these writings may be fitted, and tentatively to assign to them dates which seem appropriate for the type of teaching or the ecclesiastical conditions which they reflect.

The books in question (which compose the greater part of the present volume) differ in one important point from the Pauline epistles. The latter are intensely personal and reflect definite historical situations. These characteristics are either quite wanting or very indefinite in the case of the "disputed books." Moreover, we have the narrative of Paul's life and missionary labors in Acts, into which we can fit his first ten epistles. Such a historical framework is lacking in the case of the Antilegomena. Our critical difficulties respecting these books are mainly due to the want of historical and biographical information. The spread of Christianity through Asia Minor and Greece to Rome is mainly identified with the work of the

Apostle Paul. Of its extension in other directions and of the other Christian workers in Palestine and in the Dispersion we know comparatively little. Probably no other man so stamped his personality upon early Christianity as did Paul; if any other did so, time has effaced the impression and history has preserved to us no clear and trustworthy record of his work. The tradition concerning John's work in Ephesus, which has been preserved in the writings of the early church writers, is the nearest approach to our information concerning Paul; but it bears no comparison with the latter in clearness and definiteness. The indications of Peter's residence and work at Rome in early Christian literature are still more obscure and conflicting. The other original apostles — James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and the rest—are hardly more than names to us. While it is true that the New Testament enables us to obtain a clear idea of the most fruitful and permanent movement of early Christian history, it would be a matter of deep interest and a great aid to the solution of critical problems, if we knew more of the corresponding movements in the original home of our religion and in the East. We have reason to be thankful, however, that in some of the "disputed books," at least, we may find, outside the work of Paul, memorials of that early Christian history which has left so few and such indistinct traces on the pages of the New Testament.

THE RECORDED SERMONS OF THE APOSTLES

THE RECORDED SERMONS OF THE APOSTLES

I

THE PROBLEMS WITH WHICH THE EARLY APOSTLES HAD TO DEAL

To understand primitive Christianity, the student must constantly remember that it took its rise on the soil of Judaism. Its Founder and his first disciples were Jews. The sacred books of Judaism, which constitute our Old Testament, were the sources from which their religious and moral instruction was drawn. Jesus always regarded these books with reverence and conformed to the system of worship and observance which was based upon them. When he began to gather about himself a band of disciples he did not require them to abandon their ancestral beliefs and practices. They accordingly continued to observe the rites of the Jewish religion. They attended, as he himself did, upon the services of synagogue and temple, without a thought that discipleship to Christ would involve a break with the religion of their fathers.

Yet such a break was inevitable. Their master had

come to fulfil the law and the prophets. The Old Testament religion represented a stage in the great process of divine revelation, but the time had now come when a new epoch was about to begin. The Jewish system had fulfilled its purpose and was "ready to disappear" (Heb. 8 : 13). It was to pass away as the blossom passes away when it is fulfilled in the fruit—not by being destroyed but by being taken up into a higher stage of development. In this process of fulfilment all that was of merely temporary validity, all that was merely local or national, or adapted only to special conditions, must fall away of its own accord in order that the principles and laws which are changeless and universal might stand forth in their true and eternal truth and power. Thus only could the religion of Israel pass into a world-religion.

Of the import of this great transition the first disciples had no clear idea. Indeed, they could only gradually be led to see that any such transition was impending. It was not so much the logic of reflection as the logic of events which awakened in them the consciousness that Christianity was something other than Judaism, and that the teaching of their Master was made up of principles of universal validity which were equally applicable to all men. He had, indeed, shown them by his example that he did not regard the Jewish people alone as the recipients of God's grace, and had taught them that his truth was new wine which could not be confined in the old bottles

of Jewish belief and practice (Mark 2 : 22) ; but the gospels make it plain that they but very imperfectly understood his meaning. He was constantly telling his disciples that his kingdom was spiritual in its nature—a society and fellowship of those who were animated by the motives and principles of his own life and teachings—but they could conceive of no kingdom which was not an outward organization, like the Jewish state, and of no king who should rule merely in the hearts of men. Thus the early disciples, while sincerely attached to their Master and conscientiously desirous of receiving his word, remained, in a great degree, blind to the higher and broader meanings of his teaching and work.

When, at length, Jesus began to speak of death as the goal which awaited him, they were not only puzzled but offended (Matt. 16 : 22). That the Messianic King, the promised Deliverer of the nation, should suffer and die was to them a bewildering contradiction. Had not the Old Testament depicted the Messiah as a triumphant and reigning Prince subduing his enemies and leading his people to prosperity and peace? Now he in whom they had trusted as Messiah declared that he must die at the hands of the people whom he had come to save. Surely the dismay of the disciples at this announcement was, in all the circumstances, quite natural. Their mistake lay partly in a superficial literal interpretation of Old Testament texts and partly in a general incapacity to see that love conquers

by humiliation and suffering, and that the path of sacrifice is the true way to exaltation and glory.

At last the dreaded event occurred. Jesus was crucified and the hope of his disciples died with him (Luke 24 : 19, 20). But while they were brooding over their disappointment, they learned that he had risen from the grave. To one and another, and even to assembled companies of his disciples he "manifested himself after his passion by many proofs" (Acts 1 : 3). It was this event which kindled hope again in the hearts of the disciples and in it we find both the motive and the theme of the earlier preaching. When, later, he ascended to heaven they proclaimed him not only as the Victor over death but as the glorified Redeemer, exalted to the throne of honor and power at God's right hand.

The Gospels bear frequent testimony to the failure of the disciples to understand the deeper truths of their Master's teaching. We have seen that the two points about which they were most confused were the necessity of his death and the nature of his kingdom. Now that he was risen and glorified in heaven, the way was open for them to attain a truer conception concerning both these subjects. They had learned that his death had not involved the failure of his mission, and his exaltation to heaven was adapted to suggest higher notions of his kingdom than those of earthly conquest and dominion which they had been cherishing throughout his ministry. If the Mes-

siah's death did not mean failure, was it, perhaps, the necessary means and method of his great achievement for mankind? He had told them in advance that the Son of man must suffer death (Mark 8 : 31), and, after his resurrection, he had shown them how the suffering and dying of the Messiah corresponded to the Old Testament picture of his career and experience: "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24 : 45-47).

The opening chapters of Acts which furnish us the earliest examples of the first Christian preaching, represent the disciples as illustrating the necessity of Christ's death by quotations from the Old Testament (Acts 2 : 25-28, 34, 35). They were clear on one point: the Messiah's death, against which they had formerly protested, was a part of the divine plan. He was now exalted to heaven; he belonged to a higher world; he had promised the Spirit under whose inspiration his work in the world should be carried forward with greater efficiency than when he was on earth. Here, surely, were the elements of a wider and higher view of the kingdom than that which they had been cherishing.

It would be too much to expect, however, that this

higher idea should be realized all at once. The disciples' thoughts could rise to the plane of the Master's only slowly and approximately. We accordingly find that they still continued to think of his kingdom as reaching its consummation in a visible, outward form. What he had failed to do while on earth, he would, they thought, soon return to accomplish. Hence they stood intently gazing after him into the skies, in expectation of his speedy visible return to complete his work. This view of the method in which the kingdom of God should come continued to hold sway during the apostolic age. There is scarcely a New Testament writer who does not express the expectation of the Lord's speedy return, in visible majesty, from heaven to earth (see *e.g.*, Acts 1 : 11 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 15 ; 1 John 2 : 28 ; James 5 : 8, 9 ; 2 Peter 3 : 12, 13 ; Rev. 22 : 20).

But a more spiritual and wide-reaching view of the kingdom had also been lodged in the heart of the church. It was the idea of Jesus, that God's kingdom was a leaven in the life of the world whose progress was not " with observation." Under the logic of events and the tuition of the Spirit this conception asserted itself in ever-increasing power.

The early preaching of the apostles can only be understood in the light of these facts. Its principal elements were : the Messiahship of Jesus, his death as a part of his divine mission, and his resurrection and glorified life in

heaven. Later the Messiah's death took on a more positive significance and was regarded as the primary means of salvation. That this significance was already attached to the death of Jesus by the primitive apostles is clear from Paul's statement that among the primary truths which he had received from them was the fact "that Christ died on behalf of our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15 : 3). From a protest against his death to a belief in it as the chief saving, Messianic deed was a great transition, which could only be gradually accomplished by the study of Scripture and by the promised guidance of the Spirit "into all the truth" of Christ.

II

THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR SERMONS

We have no means of knowing the exact manner in which the reports of the earliest preaching have been preserved to us. The Book of Acts was not composed until a generation after the early discourses of which we are speaking were delivered. Meantime their substance must have been embodied in a fund of tradition which was carefully cherished and handed down. It is probable that outlines of these sermons were early committed to writing and

that such written memoranda were at the service of Luke when he composed the Book of Acts. The origin of the Acts was doubtless analogous, in this respect, to that of the third Gospel, which, the author tells us (Luke 1 : 1-4), proceeded upon the knowledge of many earlier and more fragmentary accounts of the Lord's words and deeds.

The reports of the discourses as we have them are, of course, mere outlines or summaries. The means of reporting addresses literally and in full did not exist in ancient times, and there would have been no motive for an effort to report them thus. The early teaching of the apostles, like that of Jesus, was wholly oral and was at first preserved only in the memory of those who heard it. Only later would the occasion arise to commit it to writing. Most of the discourses in Acts, if the reports of them were to be regarded as complete, would have occupied not more than two to five minutes in the delivery. It is extremely improbable that the first preachers on occasions of great importance could have spoken so briefly. In this connection it is of interest that a prayer of the Jerusalem congregation has been preserved to us. It is an outcry to heaven against the threats of the rulers who sought to prevent the apostles from teaching in the name of Jesus. It is a summary of the church's wishes directed heavenward in that time of bitter trial, a *résumé* of the petitions which the believers were accustomed to offer in this stormy period. Its substance is : " May God, the All-powerful,

who has overruled the counsels of Christ's foes for the accomplishment of his own will, give us courage to preach and power to heal in the Master's name" (Acts 4 : 24-30).

Looking at these early discourses more closely, we observe that they are built upon the Old Testament. Their immediate aim is to show a correspondence between prophecy and the experience of Jesus. The sermons were spoken to Jewish audiences. The point of connection between preacher and hearer, the ground which was common to both, was the Old Testament. Both parties accepted that as a revelation of God's will and purpose; both agreed that in its prophetic books the method in which God would save his people through the Messiah was set forth. The main point in which they differed was one of fact. Did Jesus correspond to the Old Testament picture of Messiah? This the apostles affirmed, and their Jewish opponents denied.

It was, in part, a question of interpretation. As such it was necessary to discuss it by making appeal to the language of prophecy. Accordingly we find in the summary of Peter's discourse at Pentecost (Acts 2 : 14 ff.) no less than six Old Testament passages adduced (two of them extending to several verses) in illustration and confirmation of his argument. In the speech of Stephen before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7 : 2-53) there are nine such quotations, not counting mere Old Testament words and brief phrases. This, then, was the primary purpose of the first

preaching: to show that Jesus was the Christ, that his life, death, and resurrection corresponded to Old Testament prophecy, and that it was therefore the duty of the Jewish people to receive him as the divinely sent Messiah.

From another point of view these discourses constituted a defence of their authors and of the Christian community. For example: the excitement attending the great revival at Pentecost had given rise to the charge that the Christians were intoxicated (Acts 2 : 13). At the opening of his discourse Peter took notice of this accusation, denying its correctness and furnishing another explanation of the facts which had given rise to it. The address of Peter to the people after the healing of the lame man (Acts 3 : 12 ff.) was, in the first instance, designed to show them that it was not through the apostles' own power but through the power of Christ that they had been able to do the miracle. The apostles thus disclaimed being magicians and represented themselves as the bearers of a divine power and commission. The immediate occasion and aim of the address to the rulers (Acts 4 : 8 ff.) was similar. When the apostles were charged with occasioning excitement and tumult in the city their answer was: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5 : 29). No choice was left them; they must proclaim the gospel of Christ. If their preaching caused division and contention, it was not their fault. On the contrary, they boldly charged the fault upon their opponents because of their rejection of the Messiah and

their cruel opposition to his witnesses. The address of Stephen, especially, was of the nature of a defence against the charge that he had spoken "blasphemous words against Moses, and against God" (Acts 6 : 11). Later, Peter had to defend himself against the objections which the more narrow-minded Jewish Christians made to his association with heathen converts (Acts 11 : 2, 3). It thus appears in how great a degree these early sermons were defensive. The apostles represented an unpopular cause, a movement which was everywhere spoken against. It was necessary that they should justify their conduct and their teaching and defend themselves against the misunderstanding and misrepresentations to which they were everywhere exposed.

But the sermons under consideration were not merely expository and apologetic; they were also didactic. They had a positive message of truth and fact to deliver. They asserted that Jesus had been proved to be the Messiah by his life, death, and resurrection; that he now reigned supreme in heavenly glory; that he was the true and only Saviour, and that God would judge the people by the attitude which they assumed toward his holy Servant, whom he had sent for their salvation. If it was plain and simple, it was nevertheless a great message which the apostles delivered. It was a message whose acceptance or rejection must prove decisive for the Jewish people. If the assertions of the apostles were true, if the Messiah

had appeared, then it was certain that the nation was facing its destiny. It was a great contention for a few men without prestige or influence to make in the face of all the constituted authorities. But with a splendid courage, born of faith, the apostles made and maintained this contention. Persecution and death were the price which they paid for the privilege of being witnesses for Christ, but in their case, as afterward, the saying proved true that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.

The first sermons were also accusations. The burden of the charge which these preachers hurled at the Jews was: You sought to destroy the Messiah, but God has overruled your design and thwarted your purpose. When they touch upon this point the language of the sermons often becomes peculiarly vehement: "You by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay" the Messiah (2 : 23); but "God hath made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ" (2 : 36). "You delivered up (to death) God's Servant, Jesus, and denied him before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him; you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead" (3 : 13-15). The speech of Stephen, especially, is a passionate indictment of the Jewish people, showing by a historical survey how flagrantly they have disobeyed God, how they have slain his messengers, the prophets, and refused to hear the

voice of God which has spoken to them in their history, closing with the burning words: "You have now become the betrayers and murderers of the Righteous One—you who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (7 : 53). It was with this accusation of hostility to God's will and purpose that the first preachers coupled their exhortation to the people to repent. "Repent therefore," they cried, "and turn again that your sins may be blotted out" (3 : 19); he whom you rejected and crucified is your judge; cease to be his enemies and become his friends (4 : 11, 12; 10 : 42).

Finally, the discourses in question are marked by a predictive element. They foretell a judgment to come. This judgment is thought of as being in the near future and as involving, especially, the Jewish people for their rejection of the Messiah. God has exalted Jesus to his right hand; he is Lord (2 : 36), a Prince as well as a Saviour (5 : 31), "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (10 : 43). The first preachers did not fear to tell their hearers plainly that he whom they had condemned to death was alive; that those who had judged him had themselves been judged; that God in his power and providence had reversed their decision and that he who had once meekly stood before their tribunals was now on the throne of heaven, and that before his judgment-seat they must stand. These were bold and startling utterances, and their earnestness, sincerity, and tone of conviction make

them impressive memorials of that early time when our religion was regarded as a fanatical superstition and when the profession of faith in Christ involved contempt and ostracism.

III

PETER'S EARLY DISCOURSES

1. *The Address Concerning the Choice of an Apostle* (Acts 1 : 16-22)

The first occasion for an address from Peter was during the days of waiting in the "upper chamber," where many disciples were gathered in anticipation of the fulfilment of the promise.

Judas's treachery a fulfilment of prophecy (1 : 16, 17)

"Fellow-believers, the treachery of Judas, who betrayed our Master, was but a fulfilment of prophecy. In the Psalms, David, speaking by divine inspiration, refers to one who should lose his appointed place, and this is appropriate to Judas, for he really had part with us in the service of the apostleship. With the money obtained by his treachery he bought a piece of land on which he afterward died a violent death—a fact which became notorious in Jerusalem and gave rise to the name by which the place is still called, namely, 'the field of blood.' The Psalm-passages to which I refer speak of his dwelling as being inhabited no more, and of another as taking his place.

The violent death of Judas foretold (1 : 18-20)

" It is, accordingly, necessary for us to choose a successor for the vacant office. He must be taken from among those who were associated with us and with the Master from the beginning of his ministry to the end, and who, like ourselves, can testify from personal knowledge to his resurrection."

Requirements for the apostolic office (1 : 21, 22)

2. *The Address at Pentecost* (Acts 2 : 14-39)

On the day of Pentecost the disciples were given the Holy Spirit. Its outward manifestations amazed and perplexed the multitude, who accused them of intoxication. But Peter made a memorable defence and appeal.

" Listen to me, my fellow-countrymen. Your explanation of the present excitement which attributes it to intoxication, is unreasonable, since it is but nine o'clock in the morning. On the contrary, this movement is the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy which declares that in the Messianic age the Spirit of God will come in power, not only upon a chosen few but upon all men, producing ecstatic states and ecstatic speech such as you witness here to-day. Yea, the prophet declares that in both the old and the young these manifestations shall appear. He further describes the wonders of that time in striking physical imagery. Marvels, he says, shall be seen in heaven and in earth. Dark and lurid colors shall obscure the light of sun and moon as harbingers of that great testing-day when Jehovah will manifest himself. Then

The speaking with tongues no symptom of intoxication but a fulfilment of prophecy (2 : 14-21)

shall Jehovah gather into the kingdom of the Messiah those who receive his word and accept his grace.

The purpose of the Jews in crucifying Jesus thwarted by his resurrection (2 : 22-24)

"Listen to my message, fellow-countrymen. You can not deny that God set the seal of his approval upon Jesus by the miracles which he enabled him to perform in your very midst. Now God saw fit in his gracious purpose to allow you to wreak upon him your cruel vengeance by putting him to death. But your purpose thereby to destroy him, God thwarted by raising him from the dead, for he was not destined to be death's victim.

His resurrection was a fulfilment of an Old Testament promise (2 : 25-28)

In him, on the contrary, was to be fulfilled the psalmist's words of hope, where he speaks of the constant presence and help of Jehovah in which he constantly rejoices and trusts. With this confidence he is certain that he shall not be abandoned to death and that destruction shall not claim as its prey Jehovah's chosen. Rather shall life be his portion, and he shall rejoice and triumph in the loving favor of his God.

Fulfilled, not in David, but in Christ (2 : 29-31)

"Now let me frankly say that it is impossible for these words to have found their adequate fulfilment in David himself. Long years ago he fell a victim to death, nor has he ever broken its bonds. To whom, then, does this assurance refer? Evidently to the Messiah whom God had promised to raise up from among his descendants. With prophetic foresight he was speaking of the triumph over death of the heir to his throne, the Messianic king. And this triumph has been realized in the resurrection of

Jesus, to the reality of which we apostles testify. This great movement which you are now witnessing is due to the Spirit of the risen and glorified Messiah which he is sending upon those who repent and receive him. It is not David, but David's King and Lord, in whom we are to see the fulfilment of such promises. Their language is inapplicable to David, who still sleeps the sleep of death. He himself speaks of Jehovah as addressing, not him but his Lord, and saying: 'Take thy throne of power and subdue all thy foes.' Let the Jewish nation, then, be assured that God has reversed their verdict and proclaimed him whom they sought to destroy to be the Messianic king.

Witnessed also by us and by this outpouring of the Spirit (2 : 32-35)

Hence Jesus is the Christ (2 : 36)

"You ask what God requires of you. I answer that he requires you to repent and to be baptized in token of your rediscipleship to Christ, and your consecration to a holy life; and he will bestow his Spirit upon you. This is your privilege, for God's promise of salvation through the Messiah is for you Jews and your descendants, as well as for the Gentiles. It is available for all whom God in his love has summoned to participate in his kingdom."

The practical conclusion: Repent and believe (2 : 37-39)

3. *The Address in the Temple-porch after the Healing of the Lame Man* (Acts 3 : 12-26)

One of the notable "signs" wrought by Peter was the healing of a man who had been for forty years a helpless cripple. The sight of this well-known man, given the free

use of his limbs, created an intense excitement among the people, who crowded into the temple to gaze at the apostles. Peter seized upon this opportunity for preaching.

The divine power of Jesus the true explanation of the miracle (3 : 12-16)

"Why are you surprised, my countrymen, at the miracle which you have witnessed? Why do you regard us with such wonder and awe as though by any power inhering in us we had cured this lame man? No; it is the work of the God of our forefathers, who has exalted to supreme power and glory his Servant Jesus. You, indeed, sought to destroy him, and even when Pilate would have acquitted him, insisted upon his being put to death. You condemned God's chosen and consecrated Messiah and demanded the release of a criminal instead; you put to death him who came to bestow life; but your intention failed of its goal; God defeated your wicked purpose by raising Jesus from the dead—a fact to which we apostles can testify from personal knowledge. It is through the power of the risen Christ and through dependence upon him that this wonderful cure which you have all witnessed was wrought. Now, I know, fellow-Israelites, that you, under the leadership of your rulers, put Jesus to death because you did not recognize him as the Messiah. Thus in your blindness you were really fulfilling the prophecies which depict God's Servant as suffering and dying.

The murderous acts of the rulers an unwitting fulfilment of prophecy (3 : 17, 18; *cf.* vv, 13-15)

"Repent now of this great sin and turn unto God that you may obtain his forgiveness and that you may be prepared to enjoy the rich blessings which he is about to

bestow upon his people; be ready, I say, that you may hasten the coming of the Messiah who is divinely destined to save you. For a time, indeed, he must tarry in heaven, but at length he will appear to bring in the blessed consummation which has been foretold by divinely inspired prophets throughout all the ages. Of this Saviour Moses already spoke, when he declared that, as God had raised him up as Israel's deliverer, so the Lord would also bring forth from the Jewish nation a great Prophet who should command the obedience of the race, and that those who refused to receive his word should be ruthlessly cut off from the people of God. The entire prophetic order from Samuel down have borne a similar testimony. Give heed to their message—you who are their descendants and the heirs of God's ancient promise, in which he declared that through the Jewish people he would bless all mankind. This promised blessing is now, first of all, proffered to you in that God has sent to you his Messiah, attesting his mission by raising him from the dead and offering you through him, deliverance from all your sins."

A prompt repentance will obtain salvation through Jesus the Messiah whom the prophets have foretold (3 : 19-26)

4. *The Address before the Priests and Rulers*
(Acts 4 : 8-12)

On the following day in the presence of the impressive Sanhedrin Peter showed by his bold and pointed words how far removed he was from the timid apostle of a few weeks before.

The apostle's declaration respecting the source of his miraculous power (4 : 8-10)

"You ask, O leaders and guides of the Jewish people, by whose aid and authority we have healed this lame man of his infirmity. I will answer you. I declare to you and to the whole Jewish nation that we performed the miracle by the power of Jesus the Nazarene, whom you, thinking to destroy, put to death on a cross. But your purpose failed, for God brought him forth from the grave, and, as a witness to his power, this man now stands here before you cured.

Jesus the sole Messiah and Saviour (4 : 11, 12)

"This Jesus, whom you Jews rejected and despised, God has approved and attested as the Head and Founder of his kingdom. In him alone is the Messianic salvation, for which you have been watching and waiting, to be found; he, and he alone, is the divinely sent Messiah and Saviour of the nation."

5. *The Answer to the Threats of the High-priest*
(Acts 5 : 29-32)

The Sadducees, enraged at their temerity in preaching the resurrection within the very temple precincts, and perhaps jealous at their success, again arrested the apostles. Delivered from prison they continued to preach publicly. When finally brought before the Sanhedrin and charged with disobedience, Peter declared their position.

"You members of the Sanhedrin forbid us to proclaim our message and point out the dangers of our action. All in vain. We are sent of God and we shall speak his word,

whatever men may forbid or command. We affirm that in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and in putting him to a cruel and disgraceful death you were fighting against the God whom our people from of old have worshipped. But your opposition was futile, for God brought him up from the dead, and assigning him the seat of honor and power on his throne, has proclaimed him to be the Messiah and the Saviour of his people from their sins. To these facts we apostles testify and our witness is confirmed by the working of the divine Spirit in the hearts and lives of those who receive Jesus as the Christ."

The motive and substance of the apostles' message (5 : 29-32)

IV

THE ADDRESS OF THE ALMONER STEPHEN (Acts 7 : 2-53)

His enemies had accused Stephen of being hostile to the Jewish law (compare Acts 6 : 11, 13, 14); in this address he shows that the Jews themselves have been faithless to the divine law and that they have opposed and persecuted the prophets and teachers whom God gave them. Thus the address becomes a counter-accusation.

"I am charged with speaking contemptuously of the temple and the law. Listen, fellow-Jews and members of the council, to my answer. Our God, Jehovah, called our

The divine call of Abraham and his seed (7 : 2-8)

forefather, Abraham, away from his home and his tribe in the East and directed him to repair to a new country. He accordingly left Chaldæa and, after sojourning in Haran until his father's death, came on, led by the divine hand, to this land of ours. Now Abraham obtained no permanent home in this country, although God had said, 'I will give it to you and your seed' (though at that time he was childless). He was further told that his descendants should be enslaved to a foreign power and suffer hardships for four hundred years. Jehovah also declared that he would punish these oppressors and deliver his people from their power. He then ordained the rite of circumcision as a pledge of this promise, according to which Isaac was born and circumcised. He became the father of Jacob, and he, in turn, the father of the twelve patriarchs.

The history of the chosen people in Egypt (7 : 9-16)

"In their envy these sons of Jacob sold Joseph to the Egyptians. But God blessed and protected and exalted him to a place of great influence and power in the king's court and he became the king's prime minister. At that time a great famine afflicted both Egypt and Canaan and the fathers of our nation were without food. Now Jacob, hearing that a supply of food could be obtained in Egypt, sent thither his sons for this purpose. On their second visit Joseph became known to them, and the Egyptian king learned that he was a Hebrew. Thereupon Joseph summoned from Canaan Jacob and his other relatives—seventy-five in number—to come to him in Egypt. This

they did, but were borne back to the land of their fathers to be buried in the ground which their ancestor Abraham had bought of the native inhabitants.

Their oppression by the Egyptians (7 : 17-19)

"Now as time went on the nation increased in number until a king came into power who did not recognize the services of Joseph to the country. He dealt craftily and cruelly with our people and forced them to expose their children to death. At that time Moses was born. He was a beautiful child and was tenderly cared for by his parents for three months. Then he was exposed to die, and the king's daughter adopted and reared him as her own. He was trained in all the science of the time and gave proof of great knowledge and ability. When he was about forty years of age he wished to visit the Hebrew colony to which by birth he belonged. While doing so he saw an Egyptian ill-treating one of his countrymen and he slew the offender. He thought that the people would recognize in him their destined deliverer, but they did not. This was shown the next day when he found two Hebrews quarrelling. He intervened to settle their dispute, reminding them that brothers should not do one another harm. Whereupon the aggressor repulsed him saying: 'What authority have you in our affairs? Do you claim the right to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?' At this repulse Moses left his people and dwelt in Midian, where two sons were born to him. After forty years' residence there an angel appeared to him in a burning bush

The youth and education of Moses (7 : 20-22)

His slaughter of an Egyptian and flight to Midian (7 : 23-29)

His divine call and deliverance of his people from Egypt (7 : 30-36)

in the desert of Sinai. As Moses in wonder approached, he heard the voice of Jehovah saying: 'I am your fathers' God.' In alarm he turned back, and the voice continued: 'Take off your shoes, for this place is made sacred by my presence. I have seen the tears and heard the cries of my oppressed people, and I have come to save them, and I have chosen you as the instrument of their deliverance.' This man Moses whose services his people had refused, Jehovah through his angel, who appeared in the flaming bush, appointed to be the guide and liberator of his people. Accordingly he brought them out of Egypt, being aided by the miracles which God wrought for their deliverance before they left the country, and in the overthrow of the king's army in the Red Sea, and during the forty years' pilgrimage in the desert.

The people's refusal to obey Moses (7 : 37-43)

"It was this Moses who declared that God would raise up from his people a great Prophet and Deliverer; he received from Jehovah's angel a divine commission to lead the people; through him God spoke to the nation; and yet they refused his leadership and authority and longed to return to Egypt; they renounced Jehovah and wanted Aaron to make them divinities to guide them, for they would not believe that Moses, who had brought them thus far, could accomplish their deliverance. Accordingly they made an image of a calf, an idol like those of Egypt, and worshipped and sacrificed to it. Then Jehovah gave them over to the results of their folly and they worshipped

the sun, moon, and stars, illustrating the words of Amos where he reproaches the people for their idolatry and threatens them with captivity in Babylon (Amos 5 : 25-27).

"At Sinai the people built the tabernacle according to the plan which Jehovah revealed to Moses. This tent of meeting they brought into the promised land, from which God expelled their enemies, and retained until David the friend of God desired to build for his worship a more permanent abode. It was Solomon who carried this purpose into effect. But Jehovah does not dwell in temples, for, as the prophet says, he inhabits heaven; his presence is not limited to any place. You obstinate Jews are always refusing to hear the voice of God; you are now only doing what your fathers did before you. What prophet of God ever escaped your cruelty? Those who have foretold the Messiah's coming you have slain: you are the murderers of God's messengers—you who received God's law from heaven, only to disregard and disobey it."

The Jews' rejection of their divinely sent leaders and teachers (7 : 44-53)

V

PETER'S ADDRESS TO CORNELIUS (Acts 10 : 35-43)

The conversion of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, impressively illustrates the extension of the gospel to the heathen. It was one of the circumstances in the divine

logic of events which helped Peter to see that God in no way limits his favor to a single nation. The apostle's address emphatically expresses this conviction to which he had now arrived.

The impartiality of God (10 : 34, 35)

"I now see that God regards and treats all men impartially; he receives, irrespective of their nationality, those who reverence him and do his will. He has proclaimed his will to the Jewish nation through the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, whose authority extends to all mankind.

God's revelation in the ministry of Christ (10 : 36-38)

You are acquainted with this revelation in the life of Jesus, how from his baptism by John his mission was divinely attested by his miraculous and benevolent works. We apostles can testify to these works, which were performed among the Jewish people both in the city and in the country; but our nation, instead of receiving him, put him to a shameful death on the cross. But by the power of God he rose from the grave and appeared to

Christ's death and resurrection (10 : 39-41)

those who were divinely selected to attest his resurrection, that is, to us who associated with him after he rose from the dead. He then charged us to proclaim his gospel to the nation and to tell them that God had made him Judge

The Messiah both Judge and Saviour (10 : 42, 43)

of all mankind. He is the Messiah whom the prophets foretold; he is the promised Saviour who grants to all who receive him the forgiveness of their sins."

VI

PETER'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE JUDAIZERS
(Acts 11 : 5-17)

The news that Peter had not merely preached to a Gentile household and baptized its members, but had even associated with them as Christian brethren, gave a great shock to the conservatively minded members of the Christian community at Jerusalem, who did not dream, as yet, that Christianity would be other than a modified Judaism. In answer to their challenge Peter thus defended his action.

The vision which taught Peter that God disregards all artificial distinctions (11 : 5-10)

"You criticise me for associating with the Gentile converts. I have had an experience which has taught me that this course is right. Listen to the story: While praying at Joppa I saw in a vision a great collection of animals of many kinds and was bidden to kill such as I wanted for food. I replied that I could not eat the meat of animals which are forbidden to us in the ceremonial law. To this the heavenly voice answered, 'God takes no account of such distinctions.' This happened yet again and then the vision vanished.

The message from Cornelius (11 : 11-14)

"Directly after this experience, appeared three messengers from Cæsarea to ask me to go thither. I was constrained to go with them without scruple. Accordingly we all, six of us, went to the house of Cornelius (who had

sent the men), and he told us how he had been moved by a vision to send to Joppa for me that I might show him and his household the way of salvation. As I commenced to tell him the way of life the power of the Spirit came upon us all as at Pentecost, reminding me of the promise of Jesus to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit. Since it was evident from these events that God had sent the blessings of salvation to this Gentile household, how could I refuse to recognize his precious purpose to extend his saving mercy to all mankind?"

The salvation of a heathen household (11 : 15-17)

VII

THE ADDRESS OF PETER AT THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL (Acts 15 : 7-11)

The success of Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey in forming prosperous churches, many of whose members were Gentiles, aroused to activity the stricter section of the church in Judea. Representatives from Jerusalem began to appear at Antioch to urge that the only door to Christianity was fidelity to the usages of Judaism. The question was a vital one. Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to argue it. They found support, as timely as it was, perhaps, unexpected, from Peter and from James. Peter appealed to his experience.

"You remember, fellow-believers, that I was the one

who, in the early days of our preaching, was divinely appointed to proclaim the message of salvation to the heathen. God, the Searcher of hearts, approved the work and gave it success by pouring out his Spirit upon them as bountifully as upon us Jews. On all who accepted the Messiah—whatever their nationality—he bestowed the blessings of his forgiveness. How contrary, then, would it be to the indications of his providence for us to require the Gentile converts to observe the requirements of our Jewish law—a requirement which we Jews even have always found an oppressive and burdensome task. No; let us make no such demand, since we have learned that Jews and Gentiles alike are saved by virtue of God's love revealed through Jesus Christ."

The observance of the Jewish law not necessary, since God graciously saves all men through faith (15: 7-11)

VIII

THE ADDRESS OF JAMES AT THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL (Acts 15 : 13-21)

At the same time James, the recognized head of the Jerusalem Christians, threw his great influence on the side of generosity and moderation.

"Let me give my opinion, Christian brothers, concerning the question under discussion. Peter has told you how God has opened the doors of his kingdom to the

God's gracious purpose toward the Gentiles (15 : 13-18)

The only conditions which should be imposed upon the heathen converts (15 : 19-21)

Gentile world and called them to share in the blessings of his salvation. All this accords with the picture which the prophet draws of the restoration of Israel to prosperity and peace and of the proclamation of his loving purpose to all the peoples of the earth. I give it, then, as my opinion that we ought not to impose our Jewish law upon the Gentile converts, but that we should send them a message asking them to refrain from practices which are corrupting or which give special offence, such as, idol-worship, social impurity, and the eating of the meat of animals in which the blood still remains. Such abstinence is essential to harmony and peace, since the Mosaic law which forbids the practices which I have named, is still read and enjoined, as of old, in all the synagogues every sabbath day."

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

I

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

The Epistle of James is a practical homily on Christian life and duty. It has been appropriately called "the Christian Book of Proverbs." It was addressed to a group of believers who belonged to the humbler classes and who were suffering many hardships at the hands of their richer fellow-countrymen. It is a message of comfort, encouragement, and exhortation. It is almost devoid of doctrinal teaching in the technical sense of that term. In style and contents it resembles more the practical instruction of Jesus concerning the true motives of conduct than it does the more elaborate and controversial reasoning of Paul upon the method and conditions of salvation.

The author writes to encourage his readers to endure with patience the trials and persecutions to which they are subject and to warn them against such sins as covetousness, worldliness, and the unrestrained use of the tongue. Thus the epistle is an example of "applied Christianity."

It has no formal logical plan. In its style it is simple but lively and vigorous.

A more detailed statement of the contents of the epistle would be as follows: After a brief salutation (1 : 1) the author takes up the subject of temptation and shows that moral trials will prove wholesome if they are patiently and prayerfully endured, but that temptation in the sense of enticement to sin proceeds from men's own evil desires and not from God, from whom only good can come (1 : 2-18). Next, he warns his readers to be doers of the divine word by repressing anger, controlling the tongue, and exercising benevolence (1 : 19-27). He then shows that the oppression of the poor and servility toward the rich is contrary to the Christian law (2 : 1-13), which demands deeds of kindness and helpfulness and not a mere profession of belief (2 : 14-26). He next warns his readers against the unbridled use of the tongue (3 : 1-12), and against such sins as anger, jealousy, factiousness, worldliness, and evil speaking (3 : 13 to 4 : 12), admonishes them to form their plans subject to God's will (4 : 13-17), inveighs against the hardness of the rich, and comforts the poor by the hope of the Lord's speedy advent (5 : 1-11). The epistle closes with a group of exhortations and advices regarding oaths, prayers, confession, and the treatment of the sick and erring (5 : 12-20).

II

THE AUTHORSHIP, DATE, AND DESTINATION OF THE EPISTLE

Beyond mentioning his name (1 : 1) the writer gives us no personal information concerning himself. He designates himself by the indefinite expression "a servant of Jesus Christ" and addresses his message to "the twelve tribes of the Dispersion" (1 : 1); but these terms throw no clear light upon his identity. Nor does ecclesiastical tradition greatly help us here. It is not probable that either of the two primitive apostles who bore the name of James was the writer of the letter. We hear nothing of James the son of Alphæus after Acts 1 : 13, and James the son of Zebedee was early put to death (Acts 12 : 2). Of the Jameses who are known to us from the New Testament there remains "James the Lord's brother" whom Paul reckons among the "pillar apostles" (Gal. 1 : 19; 2 : 9; compare 1 Cor. 15 : 7), and who is known in early tradition as the bishop of the church in Jerusalem. That he was the writer of the epistle is favored by the following considerations: (1) The epistle has many points of resemblance to the teaching of Jesus and was probably composed by someone who was personally familiar with that teaching. (2) The epistle reflects the practical and conservative temper which from other New Testament

sources (*e.g.*, Acts 15) we know to have been characteristic of James. (3) The relation of James to primitive Jewish Christianity was such as to make the sending of such a message to his suffering brethren most natural. This view involves the relatively early date of the letter.

Many critics, on the contrary, are of the opinion that the epistle cannot have been written by James the Lord's brother. The principal reasons given for this view are: (1) A carpenter's son would not have the necessary command of the Greek language. (2) James was a strict legalist (Gal. 2 : 12) and could not have gloried in the "law of liberty" and omitted all consideration of the Jewish cultus, as our author does; and (3) the discussion of faith and works (2 : 14-26) not only presupposed Paul's teaching but implied the long-continued prevalence of error on the subject of justification which the author is concerned to refute.

With the question of authorship is directly involved the questions of the date and destination of the letter. In favor of an early date (A.D. 40-50) the following considerations are adduced: (1) The echoes of the teachings of Jesus, already mentioned (compare, *e.g.*, 1 : 5-8 with Matt. 6 : 24, 25; 1 : 6-8 with Matt. 6 : 19 ff.; 4 : 1-5 with Matt. 5 : 43-48); (2) The absence of all discussion upon the questions involved in the relation of Christianity to Judaism; (3) The appeal to the hope of the Lord's speedy coming, which was characteristic of primitive Christianity;

(4) The simple and primitive point of view from which the subject of justification is regarded, the question of salvation by deeds of the law, which was raised to such prominence by Paul, receiving no consideration here. On the contrary, it is argued that the epistle must be late (about A.D. 125) because (1) the fact last mentioned shows that the Pauline doctrine of salvation by faith alone had led to the grave practical error that salvation was conditioned upon mere belief, and (2) such a misunderstanding of the doctrine of salvation by faith could hardly have arisen in the apostolic age, especially in Jerusalem. (3) The extreme worldliness inveighed against, the ambition to become teachers, and the infrequent mention of the name of Jesus, are thought by some to favor a late date. (4) Attention is called to the weak external attestation of the epistle. Eusebius (about A.D. 325) places it among the " disputed " books; it is not in the Muratorian canon, nor is it quoted by Tertullian. Origen is the first who mentions it by name. Although it was incorporated into the Syriac version of the New Testament about A.D. 150, it did not gain general acceptance in the church until about A.D. 400, and at no time do we find a clear and definite view respecting its authorship.

To whom was the letter addressed? The usual view is, to Jewish Christians outside Palestine. We know from the Book of Acts (8 : 1) that in consequence of persecution many Palestinian Christians left Jerusalem and that

their preaching was instrumental in founding Christian congregations in Antioch in Syria, Cyprus and other places (Acts 11 : 19-22). That the readers were professing Christians is everywhere presupposed in the epistle (1 : 18, 21 ; 2 : 1 ; 5 : 17). Some modern critics, however, hold that the readers could not have been Jewish Christians and that "the twelve tribes" must be understood figuratively. In proof of this view it is said that the general term used to describe the readers of the epistle does not agree with the supposition that the persons addressed were Jewish, that "synagogue" (2 : 2) is merely a name for the congregation, or its place of meeting, and that the regular church organization which the epistle presupposes, did not exist in purely Jewish congregations.

Every unprejudiced student must feel the difficulty of deciding upon these questions of authorship, date, and destination in view of the want of all positive evidence bearing upon them. All answers of these questions must, in the present state of our knowledge, be conjectural and provisional. To me it seems probable that the epistle is pre-Pauline and that its author was James, the Lord's brother; but I hold this opinion with full appreciation of the difficulties which it involves and with full recognition of the force of some of the arguments for a late date. In any case we have in our epistle a simple, untechnical presentation of Christian teaching, a book of practical Christian "wisdom" which is closely kindred in spirit to many of

the ethical maxims of Jesus which have been preserved in our synoptic tradition.

III

THE TEACHING OF JAMES AND PAUL REGARDING JUSTIFICATION

There is an apparent contradiction between the teaching of Paul that men are saved on condition of faith, apart from works (Gal. 2 : 16), and that of James that faith without works is dead and powerless to save (2 : 14, 24, 26), but it is only apparent, since the two writers use both the words "faith" and "works" in different senses. By faith Paul means vital union with Christ involving obedience and love; by faith James means mere theoretic belief. There is no contradiction between the statements: (1) Men are saved by entering into the life of fellowship with Christ (so Paul), and (2) men are not saved by correct opinions (so James). But the two writers do not mean the same by "works." With Paul this word means deeds of obedience to the Mosaic law (such as circumcision) regarded as meritorious and entitling the doer to salvation; with James "works" means deeds of kindness, charity, and love, the fruit of a living faith in Christ. There is no contradiction between the statements: (1) Men cannot earn salvation by meritorious acts (so Paul)

and (2) men cannot be saved without cultivating the life of Christ-like love and service (so James). The two writers may be compared to two trains which are, indeed, running in different directions, but which are in no danger of colliding, since they are not running upon the same track. Both apostles in their positive arguments in different terms teach the same truth, that true faith "works through love" (Gal. 5 : 6), that is, is an active and energetic principle expressing itself in deeds and services and issuing in the practical "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5 : 22).

IV

THE MESSAGE OF JAMES

1. *Encouragement to Christian Fidelity* (1 : 1-11)

The greeting (1 : 1)

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, sends his greetings to the Jewish-Christians who are scattered abroad.

Moral testing a reason for joy (1 : 2-4)

Do not grieve, my brothers, but be glad when you are subjected to various moral trials; for the testing of your fidelity develops perseverance. Perseverance should be allowed to reach its perfect development in you, that you may be strong and mature in the Christian life.

When any one of you feels the need of spiritual guidance let him seek it from God who freely and generously gives

his divine aid; it surely will not be withheld. But the seeker must ask in confidence and with an undivided heart; for he who is divided in his interest between earthly and heavenly good is as fickle and inconstant as the waves of the sea in a storm. Such a man, half Christian and half worldling, need not think that he will obtain from God what he asks.

Faith and singleness of heart the conditions of obtaining heavenly wisdom (1 : 5-8)

The humble believer should rejoice in his exaltation as a child of God, and the rich Christian should be glad to humble himself and serve others; for his riches are as fleeting as the field-blossoms which quickly wither and die in the sun and wind and their beauty is gone forever; so perishable are earthly treasures.

The poor Christian need not envy the rich (1 : 9-11)

2. *The Real Source of Temptation to Evil* (1 : 12-18)

Happy is the man who gains the victory over evil when he is enticed by it; for when his moral testing is complete he shall win the heavenly blessedness which belongs to the sons of God. But let no man suppose that God entices anyone to evil, for he can neither himself be favorably disposed toward what is wrong, nor can he dispose others toward it. Allurements to sin are due to man's own evil desires. These desires produce sin, and the sin when it runs its full course ends in moral death. Make no mistake on this point, my dear brothers. God, the Source of all light and truth, is the Giver of all good things; no evil comes from him; he is a Sun whose per-

Enticement to evil not from God but from man's own evil passions (1 : 12-18)

fect light suffers no eclipse; and he has brought us into the life of holiness and truth as the beginning and pledge of a large ingathering into his kingdom.

3. *The Doing of the Word* (1 : 19-27)

A lesson in teachableness, humility, and self-control (1 : 19-21)

I am telling you no unfamiliar truth. Be eager in receiving Christian instruction, cautious in the use of the tongue and in the indulgence of anger, for angry passion is not a help but a hindrance to the Christian life. Renounce, therefore, all the evil and corruption which so abound in the world, and in a quiet and gentle spirit nurture the saving truth which has been taught you. But this truth is not merely something to be heard, but something to be done. He who merely hears the truth without putting what he hears into practice soon forgets what he has heard—like one who turns away from a mirror and thinks no more of the likeness which he has seen. But when one reads his duty in the spiritual law of Christ and faithfully perseveres in obedience to it, his effort shall not fail of its reward. Self-deceived is the man who imagines that he is a Christian but puts no restraint upon his tongue. A true piety in the sight of God is illustrated by kindness and charity to the friendless and the suffering and by purity from the evils of the world.

Religion requires not a mere hearing but a doing of the truth (1 : 22-25)

Self-control, sympathy, and purity the marks of true religion (1 : 26, 27)

4. *A Warning against Partiality in the Treatment of the Rich* (2 : 1-13)

Favoritism to the rich and disrespect to the poor contrary to the Christian law (2 : 1-9)

Do not attempt, my brothers, to combine devotion to Christ with partiality toward men. To illustrate what I mean: Suppose a rich man in fine clothing and jewels comes into your assembly and, at the same time, a poor man, miserably clad, comes in. Now, if you show special deference to the finely dressed man and give him the best seat, and send the poor man to the meanest place, are you not, in making such discriminations, showing the partiality which the Christian law forbids? Reflect, my brothers, how God has reversed human conditions and made the poor to be rich in the blessings of his grace and kingdom. How inconsistent is it in you, then, to set the poor at naught. And what reason have you for showing such honor to the rich? Are they not the very class at whose hands you are suffering hardships and persecution? Is it not they who speak with contempt the sacred name of Christ into which you were baptized? If you obey the divine law which requires equal love to all men, you will meet with God's approval; but if, instead, you show partiality to one class, as against another, you will be disapproved and regarded as law-breakers.

The divine law one and indivisible (2 : 10-13)

For he who breaks the law in only one respect must be regarded as a transgressor of the law as a whole. For all the different commandments are utterances of the one

supreme Lawgiver. He who forbade adultery forbade also murder. Now the adulterer does not escape the condemnation of the law because he does not murder. Let your speech and conduct become those who are not to be tested by conformity to mere outward commandments, but by an inner motive which the heart cheerfully obeys. For to the merciless the divine judgment will be severe; but the merciful will obtain mercy and may await the divine judgment without fear or dread.

5. *A Living and a Dead Faith Contrasted* (2 : 14-26)

The futility of mere theoretic belief (2 : 14-19)

How useless is it, my brothers, for a man to possess a faith which does not manifest itself in works of mercy and love. Such a faith can have no saving value. Suppose, for example, that a believer should declare that he possessed the feelings of benevolence and pity, and yet when he met with a fellow-Christian who was naked and hungry should merely express the wish that his need might be supplied, and do nothing at all for the relief of the needy one. What a valueless philanthropy that would be! Equally valueless is a faith which does not express itself in deeds and services; it has within it no principle of life or movement. Let me put the matter very clearly. Suppose that one who is not a party to this discussion should meet the question under consideration. Suppose him to meet a man such as I have described (*v.* 14) who professes to have "faith" alone, and suppose this outsider,

in turn, to take up the claim to possess "works." How, now, will he be likely to view the relation of the two principles? Will he not say: You claim to have faith; give me a proof that you possess it *apart from works*, if you can. I, on the other hand, will prove *by my works* that I profess faith also. He might well argue further, thus: You who profess to have faith would probably quote as an example of it your belief that God is one. It is a correct opinion; but I would remind you that the demons also hold the same opinion and are not the better for it. What folly, then, to claim that any so-called faith which does not lead to deeds of mercy and love is useful or saving. Take the typical Old Testament example of faith, that of Abraham. He is described not merely as believing, but also as doing a great act of self-sacrifice, which was the fruit of his faith. For this act, as well as for the faith which gave rise to it, God approved him. God requires not only a right disposition, but also the conduct which is appropriate to such a disposition. This conduct is, indeed, proof that the right disposition exists. The two belong inseparably together. Where the conduct is wanting, it will be found that the "faith" which is claimed is deficient. The example of Rahab, who was approved for her deeds, also shows that true faith is an active principle. Thus we reach the conclusion that a faith which does not lead to a good life is the mere corpse of religion.

Old Testament proofs that only a living and active faith is acceptable to God (2 : 20-26)

6. *The Control of the Tongue* (3 : 1-12)

The importance of controlling the tongue (3 : 1-5)

My brothers, be not so eager as many of you are, to become teachers; remember that they assume a greater responsibility and are subject to greater peril than others. We are all guilty of many errors; but our greatest danger lies in the use of the tongue. He who can control that member thereby shows that he has attained a thorough self-mastery. Just as the horseman controls and guides his horse by a mere bit and bridle, and as the sailor directs his great ship through wind and waves, by means of a small rudder, so do we control our whole life and conduct by ruling that important and pretentious little member, the tongue. For as a tiny spark can kindle a great flame, so the tongue, if misused, can arouse and excite the

Difficulty of such control (1 : 6-8)

whole nature. I say that the tongue is like a fire which inflames the whole world of passion in both soul and body and rages with its mad, devouring flames through our entire being. All the creatures of the earth, sky, and sea have been subdued, but no one has ever been able to subdue that turbulent and deadly power, the tongue.

Consequences of an unbridled use of the tongue (2 : 9-12)

And what contradictions issue from an uncontrolled tongue: Prayer and praise to God, and at the same time, curses upon our fellow-men, made in God's image. How unreasonable and unchristian! You do not draw both wholesome and impure water from the same spring; nor do you take from a tree fruit which is contrary to its

nature. No more should the tongue which confesses Christ, utter words which belie that confession.

7. *True Christian Wisdom* (3 : 13-18)

The true and the false philosophy of life contrasted (3 : 13-18)

The proof of a true Christian discretion and self-control is found in a life of pure deeds and humility. The philosophy of selfishness, on the contrary, is seen in an envious and quarrelsome spirit. This is not the heavenly wisdom of Christ, but the base device of wicked men and evil spirits. For out of such evil passions spring all reckless and dishonorable deeds. But Christian wisdom, on the contrary, cultivates such qualities as goodness, concord, sympathy, and benevolence; and they shall reap an ample harvest of blessing who, in the spirit of peacemakers, sow the seeds of such Christian virtues.

8. *The Folly of Friendship with the World* (4 : 1-10)

The vanity of worldly and sensual pleasures (4 : 1-4)

The disputes and conflicts in which you are engaged arise from the lower passions which still hold sway within you. The satisfaction which you are seeking can never be found in the gratification of cruel and selfish passions, but only in obedience to the will of God. In deserting the divine law of life and adopting the evil principles which rule in the wicked world, you have forfeited God's friendship and have made yourselves his foes. Will God regard such a course with complaisance? Does he not, as the Scripture says, jealously crave to have us continue

The conditions of true happiness (4 : 5-10)

faithful to himself? Rich blessing flows from this yearning love of his. Hence the Scripture speaks of God's hostility to the self-willed, and of his favor to the teachable. Be done, then, with submission to sin and yield your hearts unto God; seek his fellowship and he will be with you and bless you. Renounce the evils which defile you and consecrate yourselves, without reserve, to God. With tears of penitence lament your sins and in humble trust yield yourselves up to God's will, that he may ennoble and enrich your lives.

9. *Warnings against Evil Speaking and Presumption* (4 : 11-17)

Offences against one's fellowmen are offences against God (4 : 11, 12)

Avoid all denunciation of one another and all harsh and contemptuous judgments, for since these are contrary to the Christian law of love, they arraign the law itself; but the Christian is a subject of the law, not an authority above it. The almighty God alone is the author and giver of the law; it is our part to obey it, and obedience requires that we abstain from the severe and censorious judgment of others.

Our times are in God's hand (4 : 13-17)

Refrain, also, from all over-confidence and presumption regarding the future. You must not plan your work as if life were certain. For how uncertain it is! How quickly it may end, as the mist vanishes before the sun. All your plans ought, therefore, to be made in dependence upon the divine will and providence. Your boastful self-suffi-

ciency and self-confidence are wrong—the more so since they are contrary to your Christian instruction and profession and a violation of what you know to be right.

10. *A Warning to the Rich* (5 : 1-6)

The perils of riches (5 : 1-6)

I warn you who are rich of the perils which threaten you. Your riches are but festering heaps of moral corruption and shall testify against you in the judgment. The complaints against you of the workmen whom you have defrauded of their just wages have been heard by the almighty Ruler and Judge. You have lived in ease and self-indulgence, but like the beasts that perish, you have been fattening yourselves for the slaughter; the blood of unresisting just men cries out for vengeance upon you.

11. *An Exhortation to Patience and Faith* (5 : 7-20)

The sad and suffering should patiently await the Lord's coming (5 : 7-11)

Await the Lord's return to earth with courage and hope, my brothers. As the farmer patiently waits upon the processes of nature until the fruit of his labor is mature, so do you wait in endurance and hopefulness, for the day of the Lord will soon dawn. Do not incur the Lord's displeasure by censuring your fellow-believers, for lo, we shall all soon stand before Christ's judgment-seat. Let us imitate the patient endurance in suffering of the Old Testament saints and prove, as they did, that it is the purpose of God in the midst of our trials to show us his sympathy and to grant us his grace.

Vain swearing forbidden (5 : 12)

And be especially careful, my brothers, to avoid the vain and irreverent use of oaths of all kinds. Let your simple word be enough, for it can only be due to untruthfulness that an oath should be thought necessary to confirm your assertions.

Instruction respecting prayer (5 : 13-18)

In your sorrow seek God's comfort; in your joy give him thanks. Let the sick seek the prayers of the overseers of the church on his behalf, and let them solemnly consecrate and commit him to God, and God shall save him from his sickness and his sins. Acknowledge to one another your faults and pray together, on each other's behalf, for God's forgiveness. The prayer of a sincere Christian secures great blessing from God. An example is Elijah. He was a man with faults and weaknesses like our own; yet we read in the Scripture how he asked God to withhold rain and it was withheld for three years and a half; and, again, he plead for rain and it was granted, and the earth again yielded her harvests.

The recovery of the erring (5 : 19, 20)

Remember that when any one of your number goes astray from the right way, he who recovers such a wanderer to the Christian life and fellowship will save a fellow-believer from moral destruction and win a great victory over the power of evil.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

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I

THE CONTENTS AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE

After greeting the readers, "the elect sojourners of the Dispersion" in various provinces of Asia Minor (1 : 1, 2), the author gives thanks to God and bestows praise upon the Christians addressed for the courageous and joyful manner in which they are enduring suffering in the cause of Christ (1 : 3-12). He then solemnly admonishes them to abstain from the sins which characterized them before their conversion and to live a holy life in brotherly love and supreme devotion to Christ (1 : 13 to 2 : 10). Next follow various instructions concerning the relations of the readers to the heathen, such as the attitude to be assumed toward rulers, the obligations of servants to their masters, and the mutual duties of husbands and wives (2 : 11 to 3 : 7). These directions are followed by impassioned exhortations to cultivate the Christian virtues and, especially, to imitate the example of Christ's suffering on behalf of others (3 : 8 to 4 : 6). Reminding his readers

that the end of the age is near, the author next exhorts them to the faithful performance of the duties of the Christian life, such as prayer and loving service, to the patient endurance of suffering, and to unshaken trust in God—the keynote of all being this: suffer for Christ's sake as he has suffered for you (4 : 7 to 5 : 11). The epistle closes with various salutations and a benediction (5 : 12-14).

The aim of the letter is to confirm the readers in faith, patience, and hope amidst circumstances of great trial. Its burden is: Hold fast the blessed hope of a speedy deliverance from your sorrows and sufferings. The encouragement which the author constantly urges is that since Christ has suffered for us, we ought to be willing to suffer for his sake, and that the present sufferings of the Christian will be far outweighed by the heavenly blessedness which is soon to be his. Thus the theme of the epistle is, the true Christian in suffering. The letter reflects a time when to be a Christian meant to brave contempt and to endure hardship. Its dominant thought is that as Jesus passed through suffering to his throne of power and glory, so the Christian must travel through the valley of trial and sorrow on his way to the celestial city; *via crucis, via lucis.*

II

THE PERSONS ADDRESSED

The form of the address: "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 : 1) would, taken by itself, most naturally refer to the Jewish Christians who were scattered abroad throughout these provinces of Asia Minor; and this is the more common view of the nationality and location of the readers. But this interpretation encounters some difficulty in the epistle itself, where they are said to have formerly lived "in ignorance" and "darkness" (1 : 14; 2 : 9), and to have been, previous to their conversion "no people" (2 : 10), but to have now become a holy people for God's own possession (2 : 9). These expressions certainly favor the view that the persons addressed were not Jewish, but Gentile believers. In that case, the language of the address would have to be regarded as figurative. Its meaning would be that they were "sojourners of the Dispersion" in the sense of being surrounded by unbelievers (compare 1 : 17; 2 : 11). Quite as likely as either of these opinions is the supposition that the letter was primarily designed for the Jewish Christians to whom the salutation seems to refer, but that the circle of readers included also Gentile converts, to whom the language is, here and there, adapted. This supposition

would be in exact accord with what we find to be the fact in the Epistle to the Romans, where, although the readers were primarily Gentile (Rom. 1 : 13), there are several passages which were evidently written with the Jewish element more particularly in mind (Rom. 4 : 1 ; 7 : 1).

III

THE AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE

According to tradition, the apostle Peter suffered martyrdom in Rome during the Neronian persecution in A. D. 67 or 68. Those who hold the genuineness of the epistle accordingly assign it to the period A. D. 64-67.[1] The principal arguments for this view of the subject are as follows: (1) The genuineness of the epistle was unquestioned in the early church. It is found in the most ancient versions of the New Testament, is cited as an undisputed book by Eusebius (about A. D. 325), and is attested by the church fathers from Papias and Polycarp onward. Both of these early church fathers were hearers of the apostles, and bishops (of Hierapolis and Smyrna respectively) in the region for which the epistle purports to have been destined. (2) The epistle is thought to contain reminiscences of Peter's life and experience as made

[1] Professor Ramsay, however, in "The Church in the Roman Empire" (pp. 279-94), maintains that this tradition is not correct, that Peter lived on to a much later time, and wrote our epistle about A. D. 80.

known to us in the New Testament elsewhere. Christ applied to Peter the figurative term "rock" (Matt. 16 : 18) and Peter speaks of Christ as the "living stone" on which the church is built (2 : 4). The writer of the epistle calls himself a "witness" of the sufferings of Christ (5 : 1), as in Peter's discourse at Pentecost he had called the apostles "witnesses" of Christ's resurrection (Acts 2 : 32). In both the Petrine preaching and in the epistle Christ is referred to as the "stone set at naught by the builders" (Acts 4 : 11; 1 Pet. 2 : 7, 8). In both he is described as having been "hanged on a tree" (Acts 5 : 30; 1 Pet. 2 : 24). (3) The contents of the letter correspond to the contents of Peter's preaching as reported in Acts. We find the same recognition of the equality of heathen and Jewish converts (compare 1 Pet. 1 : 4-12; 2 : 3-10; 5 : 12 with Acts 10 : 47; 11 : 17; 15 : 7-11; Gal. 2 : 7-10) and the same concentration of attention upon the death, resurrection, and second coming of Christ (compare 1 Pet. 1 : 3-7; 2 : 21-25; 3 : 18; 4 : 1 with Acts 2 : 23-36; 3 : 13-26; 10 : 39-42). (4) The dependence of our epistle in ideas and language on Romans and Ephesians (compare, for example, 1 Pet. 4 : 10 ff. with Rom. 12 : 6 ff.; 1 Pet. 3 : 9 with Rom. 12 : 17; 1 Pet. 2 : 13 ff. with Rom. 13 : 1-5; 1 Pet. 3 : 22 with Eph. 1 : 20 ff.; 1 Pet. 5 : 8 with Eph. 6 : 11-13) is favorable to its genuineness, since a writer of post-apostolic times, impersonating Peter, would have no motive to imitate or incorporate in his work matter from these two

letters. Galatians would have been more to his purpose than Romans because it was addressed to a group of churches to which the author of First Peter also addresses his epistle.

On the contrary, many modern writers hold that the epistle is the late production of a writer who merely used the name of the apostle to give weight to his message. Harnack assigns it to the reign of Domitian (A. D. 81-96); Jülicher to that of Trajan (98-117). The principal arguments for the spuriousness and late date of the epistle are as follows: (1) Silas (Silvanus) and Mark (1 Pet. 5 : 12, 13) are everywhere else (Philem. 24; Col. 4 : 10; 2 Tim. 4 : 11) found in association with Paul, not with Peter. (2) That Peter should really have written from Rome ("Babylon," 5 : 13) to the churches of Asia Minor, as is commonly supposed, is quite impossible. Peter had no relation with those churches, which belonged distinctively to the sphere of the apostle Paul. (3) Peter could not have written so good Greek as that of our epistle, nor would he have cited the Old Testament from the Septuagint version. (4) The epistle is an echo of Pauline teaching. If it were to be assigned to the years 64-67 it would be easier to attribute it to Paul than to Peter.[1] If it was really written by Peter

[1] Harnack ("Chronologie," p. 451 ff.) holds that the epistle was written either by Paul or by someone who had been strongly influenced by him. McGiffert ("Apostolic Age," p. 579 ff.) thinks it was written by a disciple or friend of Paul, possibly Barnabas.

within the lifetime of Paul to the Christians of Paul's province, and with such free use of his epistles, why does not the author mention his fellow-apostle? (5) The epistle contains no trace of the burning questions about the law and the relation of Jewish and Gentile Christianity, and therefore cannot have been written during the period (64-67) when these questions must still have been rife. (6) The epistle cannot be the work of an apostle because it not only gives the readers no information concerning the life and words of Jesus, but betrays no first-hand knowledge of them.

It is evident at a glance to how great an extent the argument, on both sides, moves in the region of conjecture. The strongest consideration in favor of the genuineness of the epistle is its unquestioned acceptance in the early church. The greatest difficulty which this view encounters is connected with the supposition that Peter, who, so far as we know, had never visited the provinces mentioned in the address, should have written a letter to the believers within Paul's special field of labor. The view of Weiss that, before Paul traversed Asia Minor, there were Jewish-Christian church foundations there, is without evidence and is confronted by many difficulties. That the language and ideas should have been influenced by Romans and Ephesians proves nothing on either side, and this alleged dependence is itself by no means so evident as it is often asserted to be. The unquestioned acceptance

of the epistle as Petrine in the early church from the sub-apostolic age onward, is a fact which the opponents of its genuineness do not succeed well in accounting for, and the argument derived from it is one which mere suppositions and conjectures (largely derived from our lack of information) do not avail to refute.

The traditional view that the epistle was written from Rome rests mainly upon the interpretation of "Babylon" in 5 : 13 as a metaphorical designation for Rome. But this interpretation is a doubtful one. The fact that in the Book of Revelation (14 : 8) Rome is figuratively described as "Babylon" does not go far toward proving that a similar use of words is to be found in our epistle. If "Babylon" is to be taken literally it would involve the conclusion that Peter was in the Far East when he wrote the letter.

IV

THE FIRST MESSAGE OF PETER

1. *The Apostle's Greeting* (1 : 1, 2)

A salutation to the scattered Jewish Christians (1 : 1, 2)

Peter, a chosen messenger of Jesus Christ, sends his greetings to his Christian countrymen who are scattered abroad throughout the provinces of Asia Minor, who, in the gracious purpose of God, have been called and saved unto holiness of life and cleansing by the blood of Christ.

May God's grace and peace be with you in increasing measure.

2. *The Great Salvation* (1 : 3-12)

Praise be to God who has, in his great love, given us the hope of salvation through the resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead—the hope of a blessed and glorious reward which is laid up in heaven for you whom, through your faith, God is preparing for the reception of that blessedness which shall soon be granted you at the Lord's return. In the prospect of such a salvation you can be glad, though for a brief period you have to endure bitter trials, since you know that these are but a test of your devotion whereby it is purged of its dross and made ready to shine in all its purity in the day of Christ's coming. For though Christ is hidden from our eyes he is revealed to our faith and love; as we think of him we are filled with immeasurable happiness and have a foretaste of the blessedness for which we long. How great and mysterious is this salvation! The inspired prophets who foretold it sought in vain to fathom its meaning. They foresaw that through the Messiah's sufferings a glorious era should be ushered in, but they only dimly discerned its nature. Only this was clear to them, that God was preparing for his people some great blessing which they themselves should not live to see. This gift of God has now been brought to you by the preachers of the glad

The blessed hope inspired by the resurrection (1 : 3-5)

A cause for rejoicing even in tribulation (1 : 6-9)

The glorious mystery of God's gift of grace through Christ (1 : 10-12)

tidings of salvation—a gift whose full meaning and value the angels themselves are not able to estimate.

3. *The Holy Life Required of the Christian* (1 : 13-25)

Be holy even as God is holy (1 : 13-16)

With the prospect of such blessedness before you, you should look forward with constancy and eagerness to its realization at the coming of the Lord. As sons of God you should no longer live in impurity, as you did before your conversion when you knew not the way of life; but you must live in obedience to the divine will and in moral likeness to God himself, even as the Scripture teaches that since God is holy, his people must also be holy.

Your redemption has been costly (1 : 17-21)

Now you who confess your sonship to God who judges men with strict impartiality, should live your lives in holy awe before him who has saved you from the sinful course of life in which you had been brought up, not by the gift of perishable treasures but by giving up to death as an offering his own sinless Son. Although this saving work of Christ lay in the counsels of divine love from eternity, it was only at the end of a long period of preparation that God sent him into the world for the accomplishment of his purpose, which has now been wrought on your behalf, whereby, through the resurrection and glorification of Christ, you have obtained a secure faith and steadfast hope in God. Since, now, you have entered upon a life of obedience to God and of love toward men, let a sincere and strong brotherly love prevail among you, for the germ

of a new life, the eternal divine truth itself, has been implanted in your hearts—a living and enduring seed of truth, I say, for, as the Scripture teaches, everything human is as frail and fading as the field-flowers, but God's truth is imperishable. Now it is this imperishable truth which through the gospel has been made known unto you.

Let the divine truth within you bear worthy fruits (1 : 22-25)

4. *Christian Duties and Virtues* (2 : 1-17)

Renounce the sinful life with all its evils and follies and in childlike simplicity and teachableness receive the heavenly truth by which you shall be made strong in the Christian life. You have already experienced the kindness of the Lord. Come, then, to him whom God has made pre-eminent in his kingdom that he may make you sharers in its benefits, building you into his spiritual temple, consecrating you to his service, and enabling you to devote yourselves to God in that Christ-like self-sacrifice with which he is well pleased. The Scripture describes the Messiah as the divinely chosen corner-stone of God's spiritual temple, and assures us that they shall stand secure who build upon that strong foundation. You Christians have the right to claim this assurance as your own ; but to those who reject Christ those words of Scripture apply which describe God's chosen corner-stone as becoming, not a ground of comfort and hope, but an occasion of refusal and hostility. This is because they are inwardly hostile to God's truth, for it is natural

The Christian's true life found in and through Christ (2 : 1-8)

that those who refuse the truth should reject him who is its bearer and representative. But you believers are the true people of God, the true spiritual Israel, the heirs of God's favor and promises. How greatly, then, should you magnify the goodness of God who has saved you from the blindness of ignorance and the depths of sinfulness in which you once lived and has brought you to the knowledge of himself and made you the objects of his favor and friendship.

The believers' cause for thanksgiving (2 : 9, 10)

He should be pure and blameless (2 : 11, 12)

I exhort you, my brothers, as those who are travelling through an evil world, to avoid those carnal sins which would ruin your spiritual life. Keep yourselves free from the vices of the heathen among whom you live. Refute by your pure lives and good deeds the charges of wickedness which they bring against you, that they may thereby be led to trust in God and so to rejoice in him in the great day of trial.

And obedient to civil authority (2 : 13-17)

Remember that it is the part of Christian duty to be law-abiding and to render to the various rulers and magistrates under whose authority you live that deference and obedience which are their due. God requires that by your upright life you should disprove the baseless accusation of your enemies. Maintain, indeed, your Christian liberty, but remember that it does not mean freedom to sin, but only freedom to do the will of God. Render to all their due; to your fellow-Christians fraternal affection; to God supreme reverence; to the reigning emperor respect.

5. *The Blessedness of Suffering for Christ's Sake* (2 : 18-25)

Let servants render obedience and deference to their masters not only in cases where the latter are kind but even if they are severe and harsh, for God approves the course of those who for the truth's sake patiently endure hardship and injustice. No credit is due to you for the endurance of sufferings which you have justly deserved, but if you bear with fortitude unmerited hardships God will approve and bless you in such experience. For does not our Christian life mean just this, that we should imitate Christ in the patient and undeserved endurance of suffering? He, the sinless sufferer, accepted his burden of sorrow without murmur or protest, commending his spirit into the hands of the righteous Judge; yea, he took upon himself on the cross the burden which our sins imposed that we might be delivered from sin into a holy life. He suffered for your salvation, for you were (in the words of Scripture) wandering sheep; but now you have been gathered into the fold of your true spiritual Shepherd and Overseer.

Undeserved suffering a ground of blessing (2 : 18-20)

Christ the perfect example of patience (2 : 21-25)

6. *Reciprocal Duties of Wives and Husbands* (3 : 1-7)

Wives also should be obedient to their husbands, in order that by their modest and reverent manner of life they may win to Christ those husbands who are still

Wives should seek the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit (3 : 1-6)

unbelieving. Let them not concern themselves for mere outward appearance by tricking themselves out in costly ornaments and showy clothing; but let them rather seek that inner beauty of the heart and life which is pleasing to God. With the beauty of such a meek and obedient temper were the women of the olden time adorned. It is illustrated by Sarah's deference to Abraham. You will exemplify the same spirit if you freely and cheerfully observe these directions.

Husbands must treat their wives with considerateness and tenderness (3 : 7)

Husbands, in turn, have reciprocal duties to their wives. They should accord to them all reasonable treatment and deference, not only because they are inferior in strength but because, equally with themselves, they are sharers in the blessings of salvation. You must not forget these duties, if you expect your prayers to avail with God.

7. *Encouragements in Well-doing* (3 : 8-22)

God's blessing is promised to those who return good for evil (3 : 8-12)

In conclusion, I exhort you to cultivate the virtues of concord, sympathy, affection, and humility. Avoid revenge and do good to those who ill-treat you, for in so doing the Christian finds both his duty and his reward. Hence we read in the Scripture that he who would have a long and happy life must avoid all harsh and evil speaking and strive to be at peace with his fellow-men. Such as do this God will bless and reward, while those who return evil for evil will fall under his displeasure.

If you do that which is just and right, you have nothing

to fear. Indeed, if you suffer in the cause of truth, you shall find peace in so doing and need feel no dread or alarm. Only make the spirit of Christ your own; in quietness, yet in confidence, be prepared to answer those who challenge you to show the grounds on which you cherish the Christian hope of salvation. See that you give your own consciences no occasion to accuse you, so that when you are charged by your enemies with wrong-doing, your pure Christian life will be your sufficient defence. Your sufferings may, by God's blessing, be made a means of grace to you, especially if they are incurred by the performance of your duty. This is the lesson which we learn from our great example, Christ, who suffered for no fault of his own, but for the sins of others, that he might bring us into the life of fellowship with God. But he was not given over to the power of death, for, though his body truly died, his spirit passed through death unharmed, and in his spiritual state he went to the underworld and proclaimed the message of salvation to the captive souls of those sinners of Noah's time who, after a long delay of God's justice, were destroyed by the flood, from which but eight persons were saved in the ark—as we are now saved by the waters of baptism, not, indeed, by a mere outward cleansing, but by seeking from God an inward purification. And this we do through the hope which is inspired by our Lord's resurrection and exaltation to the place of supreme honor and power in heaven.

No real dangers threaten those who do good (3 : 13, 14)

A pure life is the Christian's defence (3 : 15, 16)

His trials will prove blessings (3 : 17)

The reward which came to Christ for his undeserved suffering (3 : 18-22)

8. *Christian Courage and Hope* (4 : 1-11)

Dying unto sin and living unto holiness (4 : 1-6)

Remember and imitate the example of Christ's sufferings. As in his death he broke off all relations with the sinful world, so may you pass through the experience of outward suffering and emerge from it, purified from sin, into the life of obedience to God. Revert no more to that past sinful life when you lived as those who know not God and gave yourselves up to every base and defiling practice and passion ; nor be disturbed by the surprise which your former companions contemptuously express that you no longer join them in their wild excesses ; they, too, must stand before him who shall judge both the living and the dead ; for the object of Christ's preaching to the dead was that, though they had been visited with the common human judgment of death, they might still attain to spiritual life in fellowship with God.

An exhortation to Christian fidelity (4 : 7-11)

The day of the Lord's coming to judgment is near ; therefore be earnest and faithful in the practice of prayer and of fraternal love, for love is the very essence of a good and pure life. Be generous one toward another and share together the gifts of God, remembering that they are given you as a means of blessing to others. Therefore let your teaching of divine truth and all your Christian service be done in dependence upon God's wisdom and grace, in order that all may be to the praise of God through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs eternal honor and power.

9. *Sharing in Christ's Sufferings* (4 : 12-19)

As followers of Christ you should expect to suffer severe hardships, by which your fidelity is tested. In such experiences you should be glad to repeat the experience of your great example, since after you have suffered with him you shall, at his coming, also share his heavenly blessedness and dominion. Rejoice, therefore, when you have to suffer in the cause of Christian truth and duty, for in such trials God will bless you with his presence. There is no such comfort in suffering the just penalty of sin and crime; it is when one suffers unjustly, because of his devotion to Christ, that he has the promise of the presence and blessing of God. For in the present trials and sorrows we see the beginnings of the great testing process, which is to try all men. To its ordeals we Christians must, first of all, be subjected, and if it be found difficult for some of us to abide its tests, what will be the result for those who reject Christ and his salvation? If, I say, the test prove almost too severe for us Christians, how hopeless is the prospect of the unbelieving, wicked world. Let the Christian, then, when in God's providence he is required to suffer for his faith, persevere in his fidelity, knowing that in the care of God he is safe from harm.

The Christian must expect to suffer with Christ (4 : 12, 13)

The rewards of fidelity in suffering (4 : 14-16)

Steadfastness in present trials a guaranty of safety in the coming judgment (4 : 17-19)

10. *The Duties of Elders, and of other Members, in the Church* (5 : 1-11)

The responsibilities of the elders in shepherding the flock of God (5 : 1-4)

To the older members who bear rule in the church I (who am also an elder and a sharer both in Christ's sufferings and in his promised blessedness) give this charge : Instruct and guide the believers committed to your care in cheerful obedience to the divine will; not for worldly gain, but for the love of Christian service; not with an arbitrary show of authority, but by your exemplary Christian life; and you shall not fail of the imperishable reward which the Master will bestow at his coming. Let the younger Christians show all due deference to those who are older, and let both young and old cultivate a lowly mind and the spirit of mutual service; for, as the Scripture says, God opposes the haughty, but favors the meek. Humbly yield yourselves, therefore, to be led and taught of God, that this blessing of the lowly may be yours; nor be distracted by care and worry, since he has you safe in his own keeping. In Christian duty be faithful and constant, for Satan like a ravening wild beast is ever watching for his prey. By your fidelity resist him, nor think that the trials to which you are subject are more severe than those which have come upon your fellow-Christians elsewhere. May the author of all blessings, who through Christ has made us partakers of his gracious salvation, grant to you when this brief day of suffering is over, his perfect comfort and

Duties of the younger Christians, and of all, without distinction (5 : 5-9)

A prayer for strength and victory (5 : 10, 11)

blessedness, and may he triumph over every foe and reign eternally.

II. *Concluding Salutations* (5 : 12-14)

The writer and aim of the letter (5 : 12)

By the hand of Silas, whom I esteem as a devoted fellow-believer, I have written you this short letter in order to show you the true path of peace and safety. Do you continue to walk in it.

Farewell greetings (5 : 13, 14)

The church in Babylon [1] sends you her greetings, as does also Mark, my spiritual son. With the kiss of fraternal love salute one another, and may the peace of God dwell in the hearts of all of you who love Christ.

[1] Most interpreters understand the words: "She that is in Babylon," to refer to the church there, personified; but others suppose it to refer to some Christian woman. The expression: "elect together with you," when compared with 1 : 1 "to the elect" favors the former view.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

I

THE AIM AND PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE

The short Epistle of Jude is wholly devoted to a single object, the rebuke and refutation of certain corrupt errorists who were seeking to lead the Christians addressed astray from the faith. The writer's aim is stated in verses 3 and 4. It was to exhort the believers to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and to warn them against certain "ungodly men who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." It is evident from the language of the epistle that these dangerous persons were spurious or renegade Christians who had perverted Christian liberty into license. They were as impure in life as they were false and pernicious in their teaching. The author describes their selfish and base passions by calling them shepherds who feed only themselves, waterless clouds, restless, surging waves, and wandering stars (*vv.* 12, 13), and in lurid colors he depicts the fearful judgment which awaits them (*vv.* 7, 13, 16).

The epistle gives us no hint respecting the location of the persons to whom it was addressed. It is directed, in general, "to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (*v.* 1). The most noticeable characteristics of the letter are, a vehement spirit, a somewhat turgid style, the use of "faith" in a sense approximating the idea of a doctrine handed down from the past (*v.* 3), the appeal to the authority of the apostles (*v.* 17), the copious use of Old Testament illustrations (*vv.* 5, 7, 11), and the citation of apocryphal books (*vv.* 9, 14, 15).

II

THE AUTHOR AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE

Concerning himself, the author tells us only his name and that he is a "brother of James." There was a Jude or Judas (besides Judas Iscariot) among the original apostles (Luke 6 : 16; Acts 1 : 13) who in the lists given by Mark (3 : 18) and Matthew (10 : 3) is called Thaddæus. In both catalogues furnished by Luke he is further described, according to the rendering of our older English version, as "the brother of James." The phrase is, however, simply "Jude of James" (*Ἰούδας Ἰακώβου*) which much more naturally means "Jude the son of James" (so R. V.). On this view it is unlikely that the author of

our epistle means to designate himself as the Jude of the apostolic list.

We also learn from the New Testament (Matt. 13 : 55 ; Mark 6 : 3) that among the brethren of Jesus there was a Jude (or Judas) as well as a James. In view of the well-known position of James, the Lord's brother, in the early church, it is a plausible supposition that the author intends to lend weight to his message by describing himself as the brother of "James the just," the overseer of the mother church in Jerusalem. This would be equivalent to giving his readers to understand that he is Jude, the Lord's brother. The question arises, whether this supposition is a tenable one.

It is well known that the epistle had only a partial and tardy recognition in the early church. Its authorship was regarded as uncertain and its value differently estimated. As late as the time of Eusebius in the fourth century it was rejected by many, although widely recognized. Still later, Jerome tells us that objections were felt to it because of its use of apocryphal books. On the other hand, it is found in the early Syriac version and in the canon of Muratori and is quoted by Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. The principal grounds on which many modern critics deny its genuineness are as follows: (1) The persons denounced in the letter can be shown to have been Gnostics, and the second century is the period of Gnosticism. That the errorists were Gnostics is claimed

to be proven by the tendencies to lawlessness which are ascribed to them (*vv.* 4, 12, 16), by their pretensions to visions (*v.* 8) and superior wisdom (*v.* 16), and by their separation of men into classes (*v.* 19). (2) The objective use of "faith" to denote a traditional belief is proof of the late date of the letter. (3) The perfectly general form of the address (*v.* 1) shows that the epistle belongs to the time when the idea of the "catholic" church had begun to develop, that is, to the second century. (4) The knowledge and use of apocryphal books by the author and the way in which he appeals to apostolic authority, look in the same direction. Those who employ these arguments commonly date the book within the period A. D. 100-150.

It may be said, on the contrary: (1) That we now know that Gnosticism had attained a very considerable development and was a wide-spread and vigorous force within the second half of the first century, and (2) that while some of the characteristics of the letter do point to a comparatively late date, this is not necessarily inconsistent with its genuineness. We have no knowledge of Jude the Lord's brother from other sources, and that he should have become a missionary in the Gentile world and should have written a letter to the believers who were known to him, about the year 75 or 80, is not at all disproved by the foregoing arguments. It is vain to be certain where there are no grounds for certainty. Respect-

ing such questions as this we can only speak of probabilities. It is probable that the author means his readers to understand that he is the brother of Jesus. Nothing in the letter itself or in the history of the early church as known to us is irreconcilable with that supposition.

III

THE AUTHOR'S USE OF OTHER BOOKS

The author's chief source of illustration is the Old Testament. He uses the fate of the unfaithful Israelites in the wilderness (*v.* 5; compare Num. 14 : 28-30), the destruction of the cities of the plain (*v.* 7; compare Gen. 19), and the stories of Cain, Balaam, and Korah (*v.* 11; compare Gen. 4 : 5 ff.; Num. 31; Num. 16), to illustrate the divine judgment upon such sins as those of which the corrupt libertines are guilty. He appeals, in general, to the teaching of the apostles as containing this prophecy: "In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts" (*v.* 18). It is probable that the writer means to give in his own words the substance of some such description as that given by Paul of "the man of sin," and "the mystery of lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2 : 1-12). In speaking of those who "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness" (*v.* 4), he doubtless has in mind Paul's principle of freedom from the law which some, even in

the apostle's own time, perverted into the maxim: Let us sin because we are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6 : 15; compare Rom. 6 : 1; 1 Cor. 6 : 12).

But the most noteworthy references in the epistle are those which the writer makes to apocryphal books. The allusion in verse 9 to Michael the archangel contending with the devil for the possession of the body of Moses, is said by the church father Origen to have been derived from a book called the "Ascension of Moses." The force of the illustration is: The archangel would not utter a contemptuous judgment even against Satan, but these men do not scruple to despise even the divine powers and authority. A portion of this apocryphal book was found some years since at Milan, but it did not contain the description to which Jude refers. In verses 14 and 15 there is a still more striking quotation from an apocryphal book, the "Book of Enoch." The passage reads: "And to these (wicked men) also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousand of his holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." This is a free rendering of a passage from "Enoch," i. 9. The reference in verse 6 of our epistle to the fall of angels "which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation," is probably a reminiscence of

similar descriptions in the "Book of Enoch" (14 : 4; 15 : 3; 64 : 2). This book, which is nowhere else quoted in the New Testament, is a composite work, in part pre-Christian and in part post-Christian. It is a work which exercised a powerful influence upon popular Jewish religious thought, especially by its descriptions of the person and work of "the Son of man," the Messiah.[1]

IV

THE MESSAGE OF JUDE

A Letter of Warning against False Teachers

Salutation (1, 2)

The greeting of Jude, the bondman of Christ and brother of James, to his fellow-believers: I wish you the increasing enjoyment of God's favor and blessing.

Occasion of the letter (3, 4)

As I was planning to write you a letter concerning Christian life and duty, I was moved to urge you especially to preserve the steadfast confidence in Christ which is God's supreme gift to the believer. There is special need of this exhortation, for false teachers have crept into your midst, like wolves into the sheep-fold, who are perverting the gospel by treating the mercy of God as per-

[1] There are two translations of the Book of Enoch into English, one by Professor G. H. Schodde and one by Rev. R. H. Charles. For a free but accurate paraphrase, with explanatory introductions, see Volume VIII. of the "Messages of the Bible" by Professor F. C. Porter.

mission to sin, thus falsifying the very meaning of our salvation through Christ.

Examples of divine judgment upon sin (5-7)

Now, although I shall tell you only what you know already, I wish to remind you how, in times past, God has taken vengeance upon his enemies. One illustration is his destruction of the unfaithful Israelites when he was delivering his people from Egypt; another is his consignment of the sinful angels to their gloomy prison-house to await the final judgment; still another is the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities, and their utter annihilation by fire in punishment for their depravity.

The presumptuous, gross sins of the false teachers (5:8-11)

But these corrupt men against whom I am warning you, are giving themselves over to the same wicked practices and to an equal contempt of divine authority and power. How great is their presumption! The archangel Michael when, as tradition relates, he disputed with Satan for the possession of the body of Moses, would not utter even against him, an evil power, a scornful and contemptuous judgment, but left it to God to reprove him; but these men do not scruple in their ignorant folly to despise even the heavenly powers; they would as readily rail at good beings as at evil, while their base carnal desires, whose authority they alone recognize, are plunging them into ruin. Destruction be theirs! They have imitated Cain in murderous hate, Balaam in greed, and Korah in their proud contempt for all authority. Your love-feasts are defiled by their presence; like

false shepherds who care not for the flock, they are aiming to derive selfish advantage from their influence among you; like waterless clouds, they carry with them no benefit; like dead trees, they are utterly and hopelessly barren of all spiritual fruit. They are like the sea in violent agitation, such is the restless surging of their evil passions; like meteors which flash out brightly for a moment and then disappear in eternal darkness. To them are applicable the words of Enoch when he describes the divine judgment upon the ungodly: God shall come with hosts of angels and utterly overwhelm in destruction the corrupt and blasphemous despisers of his authority and truth. Such are the men who are seeking to lead you astray—fault-finders, lustful, boastful, sensuous and arrogant flatterers, whose favor is but a cloak for their selfishness.

Their harmfulness and well-deserved condemnation (12-16)

The work of these deceivers reminds us how our Lord's apostles had predicted that in the days before his advent ungodly and wicked men should appear and seek to lead the faithful astray. They break up friendships; they are given over to the unrestrained power of the lower nature. But do you, my brethren, refuse to yield to their influence and cling with confidence to Christ and his truth; be constant in prayer; cultivate a sense of God's love to you and hope in Christ's mercy to be shown you at the approaching judgment. As for those who have fallen under the baleful influence of the false teachers, treat such of

Such evil doers to be expected (17-19)

Exhortation to faith in Christ and tender consideration toward the tempted (20-23)

them as are still perplexed and wavering with much consideration and tenderness; those who have gone further in error snatch by eager efforts from the fire, as brands from the burning; toward even those whose deep corruption excites only loathing, a merciful feeling must be cherished, though it is naturally accompanied by alarm at their seemingly hopeless situation.

Doxology (24, 25)

And now to him who is able to save you from these fearful corruptions and to bring you, pure and holy, to his heavenly kingdom — to God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ, be ascribed all praise, honor, and authority, in all past time, now, and forever. Amen.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

I

THE AIM AND CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE

Like the Epistle of Jude, Second Peter is a vehement protest against false teaching and corrupt life, and an impassioned appeal to its readers to stand firm in the Christian faith and to cultivate and practise the Christian virtues. After the address and greeting (1 : 1, 2) the author exhorts his fellow-Christians to the cultivation of Christian knowledge and virtue in order that they may obtain entrance into the eternal kingdom of Christ (1 : 3-11). In 1 : 12-21 he justifies this word of exhortation by reminding them that it is his last message to them and by assuring them of the reality and power of the truth which he proclaims to them. He then describes and denounces the false teachers who have appeared among them and warns the believers against their doctrines and practices (ch. 2). These evil men, indeed, deny Christ's second coming, arguing that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (3 : 4); but he appeals to the prophets and apostles in opposition to

them. He reminds his readers how suddenly the flood came upon the ancient world, urges that God does not reckon time as men do, argues that the world's destruction has been delayed to afford men an opportunity for repentance, and counsels patient waiting (3 : 1-13). Finally, he warns them to be ready for the day of Christ's coming, even as Paul had taught them in his epistles, in which there are "some things hard to be understood" (3 : 16) which some are perverting to their destruction. The Christians, however, being forewarned, should stand fast in faith and hope, and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (3 : 14-18).

II

ITS RELATION TO JUDE

That between our epistle and that of Jude there is some kind of interdependence is evident to every reader. The second chapter of 2 Peter is almost identical in substance and, to a great extent, in language also, with Jude 3-18. The illustrations from the fall of the angels, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the rebuke of Balaam are common to both. In both epistles the presumption, irreverence, and corruptness of the errorists are described in similar terms. The principal differences are that 2 Peter omits the illustrations drawn by Jude from

apocryphal books (the contest of Michael and Satan, and Enoch's prophecy of judgment), and from the history of Cain, introduces references to the flood and to "righteous Lot," and amplifies (in 3 : 1-13) the reminder of Jude (*vv.* 17, 18) that the apostles had predicted the appearance of scoffers, and illustrates their scepticism by citing their denial of the Lord's coming.

Scholars are divided on the question whether 2 Peter is dependent on Jude, or conversely. The former, however, is the prevailing opinion. This view is favored by the fact that parallels to Jude are found not only in ch. 2 of 2 Peter but elsewhere (1 : 2, 5, compare Jude 2, 3; 1 : 12, compare Jude 5). The picture in Jude of the corrupt persons described as being already present among the readers is somewhat confused in 2 Peter by the representation of them, now as being present (2 : 10, 12, 18, 22) and now as not having yet appeared (2 : 1-3). Moreover, it is not easy to imagine the motive of the writer if the supposition be made that Jude is an abridgment of 2 Peter, whereas an enlargement of Jude, with special adaptations and applications, is quite capable of explanation.

III

ITS AUTHOR, DATE, AND READERS

It is well known that in all periods of the church doubts have been entertained by some regarding the apostolic authorship of 2 Peter. It is not until we reach the time of Origen, in the third century, that we begin to find a positive attestation of the book. Aside from the use of it by this great church father, there is little testimony of importance till we reach the time of Eusebius (about 325), who says: "As to the writings (of Peter), one of his epistles called the First is acknowledged as genuine; but that which is called the Second, we have not indeed understood to be embodied with the sacred books, yet, as it appeared useful to many, it was studiously read with the other Scriptures. These writings are those that are called Peter's epistles, of which I have understood only one epistle to be genuine and admitted by the ancient fathers." The ecclesiastical councils of Laodicea (A. D. 363) and Carthage (A. D. 397), however, admitted 2 Peter into their lists of sacred books, and from the fourth century onward we may date the general acceptance of the epistle as genuine.

In modern times the apostolic authorship of the epistle is called in question on grounds like the following: The epistle differs from 1 Peter in style, diction, and ideas,

places Paul's epistles on a level with Old Testament Scripture (3 : 15)—a view of them which could not have obtained in the life-time of Peter, and speaks of the mount of transfiguration as "the holy mount" (1 : 18)—an expression which in the apostolic age would have been used to designate only Mount Zion. On the other hand, likenesses in style and thought are placed over against the differences; it is pointed out that Paul himself speaks of the things which he is writing to the Corinthians as "the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37), and it is said that the mount in question is naturally called holy because the transfiguration had made it sacred to Christian thought. Many other minor considerations are urged on either side. The problem is a difficult one, and it would be unwarranted to pronounce a positive judgment where the data for a decision are so scanty and uncertain.

If genuine, the epistle was written not far from A. D. 65. Zahn says, 60-64; Weiss, 66. Those who deny its genuineness place it later—sometimes as late as A. D. 150. Some, on the basis of a literal interpretation of 1 Peter 5 : 13, and on the supposition of its genuineness, have held that the letter was written from Babylon; others, on the figurative view of the passage just named and on the basis of the tradition that Peter died in Rome, have maintained that Rome was the place of writing.

We possess no information as to the circle of readers to whom the letter was addressed. If genuine it was prob-

ably intended for the same general class as First Peter (see 1 : 1). The very general form of address used: "To them that have obtained a like precious faith with us" (1 : 1), and the evident use by the author of the Epistle of Jude, the introduction of which is equally general, do not help us in determining the nationality and location of the readers. Unfortunately this epistle is one about whose author, readers, and time and place of writing we have no clear information. The general character and purpose of the epistle, however, are not doubtful, and the value of its practical teaching need not be lessened by our uncertainty respecting the critical questions connected with it.

IV

THE SECOND MESSAGE OF PETER

1. *The Culture of the Christian Virtues* (1 : 1-11)

The Christian's call to a holy life (1 : 1-4)

I, Simon Peter, Christ's bondservant and messenger, send to you, my fellow-believers and partakers in the salvation which God has provided in Jesus Christ, my greetings, wishing you the increased enjoyment of God's favor and continued growth and progress in the Christian faith. Rich, indeed, are the blessings and rewards of the spiritual life which God has opened to us through that revelation of himself by which he has shown us how to imitate

his own glorious perfections and to embrace those blessed assurances of his forgiving love by which we are delivered from the evil of the world and are made sharers in the likeness and fellowship of God himself. Since, now, you have entered upon this new and holy life, be diligent in the culture of the virtues which it requires. In your trust in Christ, which is the foundation of the Christian life, moral courage must not be wanting; and this quality, in turn, needs knowledge to guide its action. But knowledge will not be wise unless there be associated with it self-control. Then in addition to this self-control patient endurance is needful, while with this must be blended piety. With piety must mingle love to one's fellow-Christians, and with this, in turn, love to all men without distinction. Those who cultivate and combine in their lives these virtues will prove active and useful Christians, while those who lack them will fail in moral discernment and will be in danger of relapsing into the old sinful life. In view of this peril, my brothers, I exhort you to perseverance in the spiritual life upon which you have entered; if you cultivate these virtues you will secure the coveted salvation and will receive at the Lord's coming the rich rewards of his eternal kingdom.

The perfection of Christian virtues his aim (1 : 5-7)

The desirable fruits of earnest effort (1 : 8-11)

2. *The Sure Foundation of Christian Faith* (1 : 12-21)

Though I repeat only what you already know, I shall not cease to warn you of the dangers which threaten you

A solemn exhortation to faithfulness (1 : 12-15)

and to exhort you to constancy in the Christian life upon which you have entered. I deem it my duty, as long as I live, to incite you to faithfulness by reminding you of your obligations—the more so as I am living, as Christ has shown me, in the near prospect of death. But I shall leave nothing undone in order that, after my departure, you may recall my warnings and encouragements. For

An argument from the apostle's experience (1 : 16-18)

we were not following myths invented by human fancy when we assured you that the Lord would come in majesty, for we apostles saw on the sacred mount the pledge and prophecy of that coming in the glory of the transfiguration and heard the heavenly voice proclaim our Lord to be the Son of the Father's love and the special object of his good pleasure. By such events the ancient

An argument from prophecy (1 : 19-21)

Messianic prophecies are confirmed. To them you should give attention, for they illumine the present darkness with hope and encourage us to expect the dawning of the day of Messiah's advent. And this confidence is not misplaced, because prophecy is not merely the result of the prophets' own thought, but is the product of a divine inspiration.

3. *Warnings against False Teachers* (2)

The appearance of false teachers (2 : 1-3)

As in ancient times false prophets appeared in Israel, so now there will appear among you dangerous errorists, counterfeit and reprobate Christians. By them many believers will be beguiled and, in consequence, the cause of Christ will suffer reproach. For the sake of gain will

these pernicious teachers acquire influence over you unsuspecting believers—but only for a little while, for they shall soon be overwhelmed in judgment. Their fate shall be like that of the sinful angels whom God has imprisoned in dark dungeons until the day of judgment; like that of the ungodly world destroyed by the flood—from which only Noah and seven others were saved; like that of Sodom and Gomorrah from whose fiery judgment (a fearful warning to evil doers!) the just Lot, who lamented the wickedness of his fellows, was saved (for his spirit was deeply grieved by the constant sight of his neighbors' depravity). These examples show both how the Lord delivers the righteous in times of trial and how he judges the base and the lawless. Such are these perverse men against whom I am warning you. Haughty and defiant, they do not scruple to blaspheme the supernal powers. Not even angels, though they are greater than men, and might with less presumption do so, would think of uttering such contemptuous defiance. But these sensuous free-thinkers, blindly and irrationally give themselves up to their evil instincts and plunge headlong down the path of destruction. Sunk in corruption themselves, they defile your Christian communion by their base excesses; the sport of evil passion and the slaves of sin, they carry corruption and defilement wherever they go. They are like Balaam who sought his own selfish advantage, but was rebuked for his covetousness through the word of

Their approaching judgment illustrated (2 : 4-8)

Their presumption and corruptness (2 : 9-19)

a beast to which God gave for the purpose the power of speech. Like waterless springs or driven clouds, no good comes from them; their portion is utter destruction. With boastful pretensions of wisdom, they are drawing back into the sinful life those who were beginning to emerge from it; this they do under pretence of showing them the way of freedom, while, in fact, they are themselves the bondslaves of sin and are but dragging their dupes down into the same wretched slavery. How dreadful a thing it is for weak and inexperienced believers who have entered on the way of Christian truth and life to be drawn down again by these corrupt men into the depravity which they had renounced! Of such the saying proves true: their last state is worse than their first. Better would it have been for them never to have known what the better life is than, having known it, to repudiate it and plunge back again into the depths of corruption. To do this is to imitate the animals who return to their own filth.

The perils of apostasy (2 : 20-22)

4. *The Terrors of the Coming Judgment* (3 : 1-13)

The denial of the second coming, and its answer (3 : 1-7)

I am writing you now, as in a previous epistle, in order to put you in mind of the predictions of prophets and apostles who have foretold the appearance of corrupt scoffers who, because the course of things has been uninterrupted from the beginning of the world, should deny that the Lord will come to judgment. These sceptics

persistently ignore the fact that the earth, which seemed so substantial and unchangeable, was once overwhelmed by a flood. We have the same divine assurance which was given before that catastrophe that a similar judgment of destruction, only by fire instead of water, now awaits the wicked world.

A further answer to the scoffers (3 : 8-10)

In connection with the argument of the scoffers this, too, is to be remembered, that the Lord does not count time as men do. A period which seems to us long is not so to him. Moreover, he may be delaying the final crisis in order to give the greater opportunity for repentance. But we may be sure that when the day of the Lord does come, it will come suddenly ; then the framework of this present world will be consumed in flame. In view of the terrors of this impending crisis what pure and blameless lives should we lead, and how eagerly should we look forward to the destruction of this present evil world and to the emergence of a new and purified order.

A practical conclusion from the argument (3 : 11-13)

5. *An Exhortation to Fidelity* (3 : 14-18)

An appeal to the letters of Paul and a warning against those who pervert their meaning (3 : 14-18)

In view of this prospect of coming judgment, see to it that you, my dear brothers, live pure and peaceable lives before God, remembering that the delay of the Lord in destroying the wicked means your salvation, as you have read in the letter which our dear brother Paul has written you ; in this, as in all his letters, he speaks of these subjects. His meaning is sometimes difficult and, in conse-

quence, the undiscerning and perverse often misapply his words, as they do those of the Old Testament, deducing from them false and ruinous conclusions. You are now forewarned. Be not misled by these evil men from the path of Christian truth and duty, but persevere in your fidelity to Christ and seek an ever closer fellowship with him, to whom be eternal praise.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

I

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are distinguished from the other letters which bear the name of Paul by noticeable peculiarities of style, tone, and purpose. They are less doctrinal and more personal than the first ten epistles, except Philemon. They move, in the main, in a different realm of ideas and interests. They are directed to Timothy and Titus, Paul's trusted helpers, and are designed to aid and encourage them in their labors as superintendents of Christian work in Ephesus and Crete respectively. From this object they derive the name Pastoral Epistles.

The great themes of Paul's doctrinal teaching—justification, reconciliation, and the law—are barely mentioned in these letters. Instead, the epistles deal with rules for church administration, warnings against vain speculations, and exhortations to fidelity in Christian labor and to the steadfast endurance of hardships. The qualifications of

bishops and of deacons are described at length in First Timothy (3 : 1-13 ; compare Titus 1 : 5-9) ; directions are given respecting the duties and behavior of various classes of persons—widows (1 Tim. 5 : 1-16), the older and the younger men and women (Titus 2 : 1-8), and servants (1 Tim. 6 : 1, 2 ; Titus 2 : 9, 10). The regulation of public worship (1 Tim. 2) and the administration of church discipline (1 Tim. 5 : 17-25 ; Titus 3 : 10, 11) are prominent subjects in First Timothy and Titus. The relations of the sexes (1 Tim. 2 : 8-15), of the rich and poor (6 : 9, 10), and of rulers and subjects (1 Tim. 2 : 1, 2 ; Titus 3 : 1, 2) are dwelt upon, and the superintendents are particularly exhorted to attend faithfully to the duties which are connected with all these different matters. Especially are they warned against the influence of certain current forms of error which are variously described as a "giving heed to fables and endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1 : 4), vain and confident assertions (1 : 7), hypocrisy and lying (4 : 1, 2), the prohibition of marriage and other ascetic abstinences (4 : 3), the greed of gain (Titus 1 : 10, 11), and a knowledge (*gnosis*) falsely so called (1 Tim. 6 : 20). It appears from the language used that these errors were kindred to those mentioned in Colossians—an incipient Gnosticism, largely mixed with Jewish elements (Titus 1 : 10, 14), a dualistic and ascetic eclecticism which revelled alike in superstitious folly and in moral corruption.

If we look more closely at these letters we find that cer-

tain terms and conceptions are characteristic of them, for example, "God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 1 : 1; 2 : 3; 4 : 10; Titus 1 : 3; 2 : 13; 3 : 4—not so in 2 Timothy), "the faith," used quite objectively in the sense of doctrine (1 Tim. 1 : 19; Titus 1 : 1, 4, 13); such phrases as "the faithful saying" (1 Tim. 3 : 1; Titus 3 : 8), "the sound, or wholesome, doctrine" (1 Tim. 1 : 10; Titus 1 : 9; 2 : 1), "the faithful word" (Titus 1 : 9), and "sound, or healthy, speech" (Titus 2 : 8). Such peculiarities, taken in connection with the references to the church and its administration (see especially 1 Tim. 3 : 15) show that these letters reflect, not so much the problems on which the church's very existence depended, as questions of regulating an established organization. The tone of the epistles, especially of First Timothy and Titus, is distinctly ecclesiastical. The fragments of a hymn which is quoted (1 Tim. 3 : 16), and the apparent echoes of liturgical forms (*e.g.*, Titus 2 : 11-14, 3 : 4-7), illustrate the same tendency. In reading these epistles we are in the world of church organization and administration.

In general, these epistles follow no logical arrangement. First Timothy and Titus are especially loose in structure. A still more noticeable characteristic, especially of the two letters just named, is their lack of freshness and originality in comparison with the other Pauline epistles. It cannot be denied that in these letters the writer deals mainly with ready-made materials. He is handling current coin.

He assumes that there is a body of sound doctrine with which the reader is familiar and the contents of which he may presuppose. Hence we are never told what this wholesome teaching is. The epistles do not unfold the inner meaning of Christian truth; they urge practical duties which spring out of doctrines already known and institutions already long established.

II

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION PRESUPPOSED IN THE PASTORALS

As has been already observed, the epistles picture Timothy as superintending the work of the church in Ephesus, and Titus as performing a like service in Crete. Of both these trusted friends of the apostle we often hear in the New Testament, but we nowhere else find them engaged in the work just mentioned. The epistles also presuppose that Paul wrote First Timothy and Titus while at liberty, apparently in Macedonia (1 Tim. 1 : 3), and Second Timothy while a prisoner calmly awaiting the approach of death (2 Tim. 4 : 6-8). It is evident that this epistle could not have been written by the apostle during the imprisonment when Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians were written, for then he wrote in the con-

fident expectation of a speedy release (Philem. 22; Phil. 2 : 24). It is obvious, then, that the epistles presuppose a historical situation which does not fit into the life of Paul as revealed in the Acts and in the first ten epistles. If we are to adjust these epistles to the apostle's history, we must do so by supposing that, as he expected, he was released from the imprisonment in which he wrote Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians, resumed his missionary journeying, during which he wrote First Timothy and Titus, was then reimprisoned and condemned to death, and, during his last days, wrote Second Timothy. These statements serve to raise the whole question of the authorship and date of the epistles.

III

THE AUTHORSHIP AND DATE OF THE EPISTLE

The objections to the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles are mainly derived from the peculiarities which have been sketched. They do not apply equally, however, to all three epistles. We shall see that Second Timothy furnishes fewer difficulties than the other two. Summarily stated, the principal difficulties are: (1) There is no place for them in the known life of Paul. (2) They are unpauline in language and ideas and are especially

lacking in the vigor and penetration which are characteristic of Paul's letters. (3) They presuppose a highly developed ecclesiastical system which cannot be earlier than the second century. (4) The errors combated must be later than Paul's time. (5) They are loose in logical structure and bear the marks of being the work of different hands. All these considerations are urged with special force against First Timothy and Titus. Attention is called to the phrases: "oppositions (*antitheseis*) of the knowledge (*gnosis*) falsely so-called" (1 Tim. 6 : 20) as being probably an allusion to the work of the Gnostic Marcion called *Antitheseis;* to the characterization of the church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3 : 15), which is said to reflect the ecclesiastical conceptions of the post-apostolic age; to the fact that in Titus the elders and the bishops are separately mentioned (1 : 5, 7) as if they were no longer one and the same, as in the apostolic age, and to the mention of the elders as composing a "presbytery" (1 Tim. 4 : 14), that is, a college or compacted body of rulers. The existence, too, of an order of widows, a recognized company of dependent women who, under certain conditions, were, at least, partially supported by the church (1 Tim. 5 : 3-16), is thought to point to a late date, since no such institution or arrangement is known to have existed in the apostolic age.

The question of fitting the epistles into the framework

of Paul's life will be considered in connection with Second Timothy. The errors characterized are, no doubt, Gnostic in their main features. But so also were those which were rife at Colossæ. We now know that Gnosticism existed in all its essential elements in the apostolic age. The principal difficulties are connected with the language and thought and with the church-order presupposed. It is not certain that bishop and elder denote different officers in First Timothy and Titus, although the separate references to them (1 Tim. 3 : 1-7 ; 5 : 1, 17 ; Titus 1 : 5, 7-9) makes such an interpretation plausible. It must, however, be admitted that one cannot attentively read First Timothy, for example, without being struck by its lack of directness, vigor, and grasp upon the deep truths of Christianity which characterize Paul's earlier letters. These difficulties are partly, but not wholly, removed by the special object which the letter has in view. The supposition of many scholars that some brief memoranda of Paul's have been incorporated into this manual for the regulation of church administration, is not an unreasonable one. In this way it could be explained how Paul's name was associated with the message sent to Timothy and why it was received as Paul's in the church at large.

We shall see later that if our epistle be regarded as being directly and entirely the work of Paul it must have been composed about A. D. 65. If the view that it is a manual from a later hand, into which some Pauline fragments

were incorporated, be adopted, its date would need to be placed a considerable number of years later. Professor Harnack, who adopts this theory, places the epistle about A. D. 100-110. While certainty concerning the authorship and date of the Pastorals is not attainable, it may be said that an increasing number of scholars favor the supposition of composite authorship or compilation and a comparatively late date. This supposition accounts for the peculiarities of the epistles, and, at the same time, explains the connection with them of the name of Paul. On this view the epistles are Pauline in a modified sense, though not composed by his hand.

The question of authorship will meet us again in connection with Second Timothy, in which the peculiarities to be explained are of a somewhat different character.

IV

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF TIMOTHY

With Timothy we are made acquainted by the Book of Acts (16 : 1-3). He was a resident of Lystra and was already a devoted Christian disciple when Paul visited that city on his second missionary tour. Not improbably he had been converted by the apostle on his earlier visit to Lystra (Acts 14 : 6-22). We are told that his mother was a Jewess—a fact which, no doubt, explains Paul's

willingness that he should be circumcised (Acts 16 : 3) in order that no needless offence should be given to the Jews. Timothy became the apostle's efficient helper in his missionary work and his name is coupled with that of Paul in the salutations of five of his letters (1 and 2 Thess., 2 Cor., Col., Phil.). He was with the apostle when from his Roman prison he wrote Colossians (1 : 1) and Philippians (1 : 1). Thereupon he disappears from view until we meet with him again in the Pastoral Epistles. They give us, besides the general facts already mentioned, some further details concerning his life—the names of his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1 : 5) and the careful training which he had received in the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3 : 14, 15), and tell us that Paul in his last days greatly desired the presence of his spiritual son (2 Tim. 4 : 21).

The picture which the Pastoral letters paint of Timothy is that of a devoted and sincere man, who, however, appears somewhat lacking in firmness and courage. He seems to have shrunk from responsibility and to have been much discouraged by the perplexities and trials of his position. He is represented as being in danger, not only of allowing those committed to his charge to be led astray, but even of coming himself under the baleful influence of false teaching. Perhaps he was one of those men who can work more successfully under the direction of another than when left to himself.

V

THE FIRST MESSAGE TO TIMOTHY

1. *A Charge to Keep the Gospel Pure* (1)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

I, Paul, a divinely commissioned apostle of Christ, send to you, my spiritual son Timothy, salutations of grace, mercy, and peace.

The current systems of speculation are to be avoided and their teachers rebuked (1 : 3-7)

I now repeat the exhortation which I gave you when I was about to start for Macedonia; namely, that you should warn certain false teachers from devoting their attentions to foolish myths and speculations concerning the derivation of spiritual beings — subjects which provoke disputes rather than help men to discharge their duties as faithful stewards of God; for the goal of the gospel requirement is love pure and sincere, and faith without pretence. Some have deserted these truths and in their folly have assumed to be expounders of the divine law, without knowing at all the true import of that which they pretend to teach. Now the law of God is certainly profitable, if it is used according to its right meaning and intention, and it is only rightly used when one considers that it exists not for him who fulfils the divine will in free obedience, but to rebuke and restrain those who are guilty of various sins and crimes and of whatever conduct is contrary to the wholesome in-

The Christian should devote himself to wholesome and moral teaching (1 : 8-11)

struction contained in the gospel. This is the view of the nature and use of the law which accords with the glorious good news which God has now proclaimed and with whose proclamation I have been intrusted.

The grace of Christ in calling Paul to his service (1 : 12-17)

Praise be to Christ, who strengthened me and deemed me fit to enter his service, though I was one who profaned sacred things and bitterly opposed his cause. But he had compassion upon me, for I did not know how sinful my conduct was; and the abounding grace of Christ reached even to me and produced in me the fruits of faith and love. True beyond all question is that word, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," for I was the greatest sinner. But God had mercy upon me, in order that, in the case of a great evil-doer such as I was, he might show forth all the richness of his forgiving grace as an illustration of the forbearance which he would show toward those who should afterward believe on Christ for salvation. Now to the one God, the glorious King of the ages, be all praise ascribed, forever.

An exhortation to faithfulness (1 : 18-20)

This instruction, then, my son Timothy, respecting the true Christian teaching, I now deliver to you, in accord with the predictions of your faithful service to Christ, which were formerly made. In fulfilment of them do you fight the good fight. Hold fast to Christ and to a pure purpose in his service. Be warned by the loss of faith on the part of some; for example, Hymenæus and Alexander, whom I have remanded to Satan that he may inflict

upon them sufferings which shall deter them in the future from the profanation of sacred things.

2. *Directions Concerning the Worship of the Church* (2)

Prayer to be offered for all classes of men (2 : 1-7)

The first point, then, which I charge you to observe is that, in the public worship, all classes of men be remembered in the prayers. Let God's guidance be asked for rulers and magistrates, that the church may enjoy the blessings of rest and peace in the practice of all Christian virtues. The offering of such prayers on behalf of all men is pleasing to God, since he desires the salvation of all. For there is one God, the Author of salvation for all, and one Mediator, Christ Jesus, who himself shares man's nature and died to save all men—a work of grace which was destined to be proclaimed to the world in God's own time, and for whose proclamation I solemnly declare that I was divinely appointed as a herald and messenger that I might lead the heathen to believe on Christ.

Public worship to be conducted by men, not by women (2 : 8-15)

I further direct that, wherever Christian congregations assemble, the men should offer up public prayer in reverence and peaceableness. Also, that the women appear in the congregation in modest guise and demeanor; not decked out in artificial ornaments and wearing costly raiment and jewels, but adorned (as Christian women should be) with the beauty of a good life. In the public

assembly the women are to listen and learn with all docility. I forbid them to assume the function of public teachers or to assert their authority over the men in the conduct of the affairs of the church, and require that they be quiet in the assembly. For man was a prior, woman a subsequent, creation of God; moreover, it was not man, but woman, who yielded to the voice of the tempter; but she shall realize her salvation, not by assuming the functions of public life, but by keeping, in all faithfulness and simplicity, to her allotted sphere as wife and mother.

3. *The Qualifications and Duties of Church Officers* (3)

The qualities required in overseers (3 : 1-7)

The high estimation in which the office of overseer is held in the church is well warranted. Among the qualifications required in one who would assume this office are: purity of private life, generosity, capacity for teaching, peaceableness, freedom from greed, ability to govern his own household and to restrain his children from all lawless and froward action (for how could one administer the affairs of the church who cannot regulate his own household?), and experience in Christian work, so that he may not, by reason of his conceit, expose himself to the divine judgment which Satan through his pride incurred. Moreover, he must sustain a good reputation among those outside the church, so as not to fall a prey to the wiles of the tempter. Deacons, too, must be honorable, straightforward, temperate, free from covetousness, keeping the

Those required in deacons (3 : 8-13)

treasure of Christian truth in purity of heart. The office should not be assumed except by those whose fidelity has been well proved. Their wives, also, must possess the moral qualities which have been mentioned. Deacons, I repeat, must be exemplary in private and family life, for the faithful discharge of their office leads to an honorable position in the church and to the confident assurance—grounded upon faith in Christ—of the church's appreciation.

The importance of observing these directions (3 : 14-16)

I am writing in the hope of visiting you soon; but if I am prevented from doing so, these written instructions will serve to show you how to regulate the worship and government of the church, which is the support and preserver of the divine truth. And this secret of God's truth as revealed in Christ is confessedly deep and weighty, including (as one of our hymns expresses it) the facts of his incarnation, his attestation by the Holy Spirit, the ministration of angels to him, the preaching of his gospel to the heathen, its wide-spread reception and his glorious ascension.

4. *Errors to be Avoided and Rebuked* (4)

Asceticism a dangerous form of devotion (4 : 1-5)

Now it is expressly foretold in prophecy that in the closing period of this present age some will relinquish their trust in Christ and give themselves over to the evil influences of demoniacal powers, being led astray by pretentious false teachers who are well aware of their own wickedness and

guilt. Among their erroneous teachings is their prohibition of marriage and their insistence upon ascetic abstinence from certain kinds of food which God created for man's use, and which Christians should gratefully receive and enjoy. For all the provisions of God for man's life are wholesome, and should be gratefully accepted and used, for they are made holy by the partaker's solemn words of thanksgiving.

Spiritual discipline and earnest effort far preferable (4 : 6-16)

If you impress these truths upon the minds of your fellow-Christians, you will prove yourself an acceptable servant of Christ, mature in the Christian life and knowledge in which you have been nurtured. Pay no heed to the irreverent and silly myths of the false teachers. Train yourself in spirituality; for though physical gymnastics have a temporary value for our present welfare, spiritual training secures benefits both for the present and for the future life. This is a statement whose truth none can gainsay. That we may achieve this heavenly good we toil and struggle, being moved thereto by our hope in God's salvation, which is freely offered to all; but is realized by those who believe on Christ. Enforce these principles in your instruction. So conduct yourself that no one shall lose respect for you on account of your youth; in public and private life set a good example before your fellow-Christians. While I am absent be diligent in the public reading of the Scriptures and in the work of religious instruction. Do not fail to use God's gracious gift

for teaching and administration, which the Spirit bestowed upon you in accordance with a prophecy which was spoken when the body of elders, by the imposition of their hands, set you apart to your office. Bear these exhortations steadfastly in mind and carefully observe them, that all may note your attainments in Christian grace and knowledge. Have careful regard to your own life and to the work of instruction of which you have supervision. Be true to all the duties which I have enjoined upon you, and you will thereby further both your own salvation and that of those committed to your guidance.

5. *Rules for the Administration of the Church* (5)

Directions for the just and generous treatment of widows (5 : 1-8)

Accord to the persons of your charge the consideration and treatment which are appropriate to their age and position. Have a special care for those widows who are utterly destitute and dependent. In cases where widows have children or grandchildren who can support them, they should be enjoined to do so, thus making return for what their parents had done for them ; God's blessing is promised upon such a fulfilment of filial duty. Now the widow who is wholly dependent and friendless puts her trust in God alone and worships and serves him continually ; while she who gives herself up to wanton pleasures abandons herself to moral death. Carefully observe these directions, that the widows of your charge cause no scandal in the church. Now with respect to the support

of widows, the general principle is that each person must care for his own relatives ; if he does not, he fails to show the natural affection which even the heathen exhibit. Let no widow be placed on the list of church pensionaries who does not fulfil the following conditions : She must be not less than sixty years of age, must have lived an unsullied conjugal life, and must be well attested as one who has reared and trained her own children well, shown generosity, served her fellow-believers, comforted the sorrowing, and, in short, as having lived a life of faithful Christian service. Do not enroll widows who are under sixty, for they are likely to turn away from Christ to worldly pleasures, and to marry again, and thus to incur the blame of forsaking their allegiance to Christ. Thus they readily form habits of laziness, gossiping, meddlesomeness, and recklessness in speech. I therefore counsel that these younger widows marry and rear families, so as to bring no reproach upon the church ; for some of them have already deserted the path of the Christian life. If any Christian woman have widowed relatives dependent upon her, let her, if possible, support them, that the church may be relieved from assuming their maintenance, so that it can reserve its entire bounty for those widows who have no one to provide for their wants.

The conditions of their support by the church (5 : 9-16)

Elders who faithfully perform their office of superintendency, deserve special praise, especially such as teach and preach. For the Old Testament, in saying that the

The appointment and treatment of presbyters (5 : 17-22)

ox, while threshing, should not be muzzled, recognizes the principle which Jesus proclaimed when he said that the laborer is worthy of his reward. Do not entertain a charge made against an elder, unless it is supported by the testimony of two or three witnesses. When elders transgress the law of the Christian life, rebuke them in the presence of the whole church, that all may be warned of the peril of such action. I solemnly charge you to observe these directions and to apply them without unjust discrimination. Avoid all haste in setting men apart to church offices, so as not to incur blame if they prove unworthy ; preserve yourself from all such partnership in their wrong-doing. Give up the ascetic rule of drinking water only, and for the benefit of your health make a moderate use of wine. The sins of some men are manifest before the eyes of all and herald their coming judgment, while those of others are concealed and await the disclosure of their real character. Similarly, the good deeds of some are known and recognized beforehand, while those of others, though for the time unobserved, are certain to come to light at the judgment.

Necessity of setting a good example to others (5 : 23-25)

6. *The Application of Christian Principles to Practical Problems* (6)

The duty of the Christian slave (6 : 1, 2)

Christian slaves must accord to their masters all due respect and obedience, so as not to bring reproach upon the gospel. Those who have Christian masters must not

disregard their obligations to them on the ground that their superiors are fellow-Christians, but, rather, render them all due service just because the masters who receive the service are Christian brethren. These warnings must be emphasized in your teaching.

The dangers of avarice and ambition (6 : 3-10)

Reverting to the errors of which I was speaking, I repeat that those who offer you a different teaching from the wholesome gospel of Christ and the doctrine which is promotive of piety, do so from pride and ignorance. They have a morbid appetite for idle disputations and wranglings, which only serve to stir up evil passions and to promote violent collisions among those base and false men who regard religion as a means of worldly gain. But the true good in life is secured by piety coupled with a contented mind; for why should we be greedy of earthly gain? It is merely granted to man for a little while and must soon be surrendered. How much better to be satisfied with the supply of our needs than to crave after riches! For those who make the possession of wealth their goal in life expose themselves to many perils and evils which often overwhelm them in moral ruin. For from avarice springs every sort of sin, and some have been beguiled by it into renouncing their Christian profession and have thus brought upon themselves bitter pain and shame.

But do thou, the Lord's servant, avoid avarice and its consequences, and pursue, instead, the great Christian

The Christian's call to faithfulness and purity (6 : 11-16)

virtues. Manfully wage the warfare to which your faith inspires you, making the life eternal the goal of your striving, for to this were you summoned at your conversion and committed by your public confession of Christ. I charge you before God, the source of all life, and before Christ, who fearlessly professed his Messiahship before the Roman procurator, to keep the Christian law unsullied and inviolate till the Lord's return, which, in due time, shall be brought to pass by our great and mighty God, to whom, changeless, supremely glorious, majestic, and invisible, be ascribed praise and dominion forever.

The right use of wealth (6 : 17-19)

Enjoin upon those who possess worldly wealth not to be proud on this account, and not to trust in their perishing possessions, but to trust in God, who gives abundance of this world's goods, not that we may be proud of them, but that we may rightly enjoy and use them. Charge them to practise benevolence, to seek the wealth of good works, to be generous and sympathetic, thus storing up for themselves, as a ground of reward, a treasure of good deeds, that they may attain the true, heavenly life.

Parting instructions (6 : 20, 21)

And do you, O Timothy, keep fast hold of the wholesome teaching which has been intrusted to you. Avoid irreverent and empty word-strifes and the contradictions and conflicts of the false teachers who offer you a pretentious and spurious knowledge by which some have already been beguiled from their allegiance to Christ. May his grace be yours.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

I

TITUS AND HIS MISSION IN CRETE

The information which the New Testament furnishes us concerning the apostles's assistant to whom this letter of advice and encouragement was addressed, is quite meagre. From Gal. 2 : 1, 3, we learn that he was closely associated with Paul and Barnabas at Antioch during their missionary labors there (Acts 11 : 19 ff.), and that he accompanied them to Jerusalem when they went up to attend the famous apostolic council (Acts 15; Gal. 2). Titus was a Greek, possibly a Cretan, and the question whether he should be circumcised or not was made a test-case regarding the whole problem of the relation of Gentile converts to the church. Paul implies (Gal. 2 : 3) that there were Judaizers who demanded his circumcision in conformity with their maxim that unless Gentile converts were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved (Acts 15 : 1). To this demand, which the primitive apostles did not support, Paul refused to yield, and thus a signal victory was gained for the apostle's

principle that Christians need not become Jews, since faith in Christ is the sole condition of salvation.

During Paul's missionary tours Titus was one of his most trusted assistants. On three occasions he was sent by the apostle to Corinth on missions of peculiar delicacy and difficulty owing to the disturbed condition of the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 2 : 13; 8 : 6; 12 : 18). The success of his efforts at reforming the abuses at Corinth and in making the collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem testifies to his ability, tact, and strength of character, and justifies the confidence and affection which the apostle reposed in him.

After the time to which the passages just cited refer, we hear nothing more of Titus until he appears in our epistle as the superintendent of the churches in the island of Crete. He is said to have been left there by the apostle that he might "set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city" (1 : 5). He is addressed as Paul's "true child after a common faith" (1 : 4). He is instructed in the epistle concerning the duties of his office, but these admonitions and advices are less personal than are those which are addressed to Timothy in the First Epistle and therefore throw less light upon his personality. Of the Cretans among whom Titus was called to labor we have no knowledge beyond the very meagre information which may be gleaned from this letter. They are described as a very coarse people by one of their own

prophets or soothsayers (1 : 12), and the whole tone of the epistle would lead us to think that they proved an easy prey for the corrupt leaders who sought to turn them aside from "the wholesome teaching" of the gospel.

II

THE PECULIARITIES OF THE EPISTLE

In general, the peculiarities of the epistle to Titus are the same as those which mark the first letter to Timothy. The two epistles are closely kindred in subject, contents, and purpose, and probably belong together in time and authorship. The same use of terms is characteristic of both—"the faith," "God our Saviour," "the sound doctrine," and "the trustworthy" or "wholesome word." The same ecclesiastical arrangements and interests are reflected—the separate mention of elders and "the bishop," warnings against corrupt Jewish ascetics, and directions respecting the conduct of various classes of persons in the church. The instructions given with reference to these subjects are less detailed than in First Timothy, and some topics which find a place in that letter are quite wanting in the Epistle to Titus, as, for example, the subjects recommended for public prayer (1 Tim. 2 : 1, 2), the directions that the prayers of the congregation be led by the men and that the women "learn in quietness with all subjec-

tion" (1 Tim. 2 : 8-15). The character required in a bishop, or overseer, is depicted in much the same terms in both epistles (1 Tim. 3 : 1-7; Titus 1 : 7-9), but no mention is made of deacons in Titus (compare 1 Tim. 3 : 8-10). The qualifications of elders are very briefly sketched in Titus (1 : 6)—the terms used closely resembling those which are applied to the bishop in First Timothy (3 : 2-5)—while in First Timothy we find not so much a statement of the qualifications of elders, as a description of the dignity belonging to them and of the way in which they should be treated (1 Tim. 5 : 17-20). The order of widows, which is so prominent a theme in First Timothy (5 : 3-16), does not appear at all in the letter to Titus. Nor are the rich, who are so solemnly warned in First Timothy against pride and covetousness (6 : 9, 10, 17-19), mentioned in the shorter epistle. The same loose arrangement of materials is noticeable in both epistles, although it is more marked in the former. In Titus the following is the order of subjects: After the salutation (1 : 1-4) comes the description of the qualifications of elders and the bishop (1 : 5-9) and then a picture of the false teachers (1 : 10-16). They are described as Jewish —"of the circumcision," "giving heed to Jewish fables" (1 : 10, 14)—and, yet, into the midst of the description is thrust a characterization of the Cretans by "one of their own prophets" (1 : 12). Then follow directions concerning the duties of aged women, young women and servants

(ch. 2), and exhortations to the cultivation of various Christian virtues (3 : 1-11). The epistle ends with personal greetings and a benediction (3 : 12-15). We observe that, throughout, "the sound doctrine" is the constantly recurring note. The elders and the bishop must have certain qualities in order that the "faithful word" (1 : 9) may be maintained. The false teachers must be refuted and the appropriate duties of the various classes in the church performed, in the interest of "the sound doctrine" (2 : 1, 8, 10). Very noticeable, too, is the repeated recommendation of "good works" (3 : 8, 14).

III

AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

The question of the authorship and date of our epistle is substantially the same as in the case of First Timothy. In neither can it be claimed that the doctrine is positively unpauline. In fact, certain passages, such as Titus 3 : 4-7 and 1 Timothy 1 : 15, 16, may be regarded as summaries of the apostle's teaching. Yet, the difficulties of attributing the epistles, in their present form, to the apostle are, as was shown in the introduction to First Timothy, very great. It is probable that criticism will finally rest in the supposition that certain oral or written instructions of Paul for the guidance of his helpers have been elaborated and

incorporated into these pastoral messages by a writer who adapted the principles contained in them to the circumstances and needs of a somewhat later time.

IV

THE MESSAGE TO TITUS

1. *The Regulation of the Churches and the Maintenance of a Pure Gospel* (1)

Salutation and blessing (1 : 1-4)

I, Paul, whom God has bound to his service, and Christ has commissioned to promote the true faith of God's people and the right understanding of the wholesome doctrine which assures us of the blessed life, which the ever faithful God in ancient days promised to his people, but now in his own appointed time has revealed in the gospel which he has bidden me to preach—invoke upon you, Titus, my true spiritual son in Christ, the blessing of God our Father and of Christ our Saviour.

The appointment and qualifications of elders (1 : 5-9)

The purpose of my leaving you in Crete was that you should supply the defects in the organization of the churches and carry out my previous instruction to provide each church with a board of elders. Remember that those only are eligible to this office who are, in their moral life, above suspicion, blameless in their marital relations, and whose children are irreproachable Christians. For the overseer of the church must be subject to no ac-

cusation; he must be neither obstinate, nor irritable, nor quarrelsome, nor avaricious, but generous, kind, sober-minded, upright, and self-controlled, holding fast the wholesome teaching of the gospel, that he may both edify believers and refute the false teachers.

Current corruptions in life and doctrine (1 : 10-16)

For there are many self-willed errorists, devoted to foolish and hurtful questions, especially certain Judaizers, who ought to be silenced—men who lead whole families into unbelief, exercising a destructive influence, and all for the sake of base gain. The corruption which may be found among the Cretans is described by one of their own soothsayers, who pronounces them a treacherous, rude, and sensual people. It is a true indictment. Therefore you will need to employ rigorous measures to keep them loyal to Christ and to prevent them from being led astray by Judaizing speculations and perverse human distinctions and abstinences. To those who have clean hearts all outward things are clean; but for those who are inwardly corrupt nothing is clean, for the impure mind defiles everything. These wicked men pretend to have a special knowledge of God, but by their utterly corrupt, detestable, and pernicious deeds they completely belie this profession.

2. *The Obligation of the Christian Believer* (2)

Let your instruction be in accord with the healthful teaching of the gospel. Require the aged men to prac-

Maxims for the guidance of the aged (2 : 1, 2)

tise self-control, to maintain a Christian bearing, and to evince the virtues of faith, love, and endurance. Exhort the aged women also to conduct themselves in a manner befitting their profession, to avoid slander and excess in wine-drinking, and to instruct others in the way of Christian virtue. Bid them to admonish the young women of their duty to love their husbands and children, and to be discreet, chaste, domestic, and obedient to their husbands, in order that the gospel may suffer no reproach on account of their conduct. Let the younger men be taught self-control. Do you yourself set before others a good Christian example in all respects; let your teaching be pure, chaste, and, both in its form and matter, free from everything which is at variance with the gospel, in order that your adversaries may be disarmed by the irreproachable character of your life and teaching. Bondmen should be taught to obey and to please their masters; not to object to performing their duties, nor to pilfer from their superiors, but to render them just and faithful service, that their conduct may in all respects do honor to the gospel. For the revelation of God's all-embracing, saving purpose, which has been made in Christ, has shown us that we must renounce the wicked and corrupt life and live purely and uprightly during this brief and evil age, while we eagerly expect the glorious advent of Christ, our divine Saviour, who died to save us from all sin and to acquire for himself a holy people, devoted to good deeds.

Duties of young wives (2 : 3-5)

Necessity of setting a good example (2 : 6-8)

Obligations of slaves (2 : 9, 10)

The motives for right living (2 : 11-15)

Demand the observance of these instructions. Permit no one to treat them lightly.

3. *Practical Duties; Farewell Greetings* (3)

The duty of obedience to lawful authority and of courtesy (3 : 1-3)

Remind the Christians of Crete to be obedient to their Roman magistrates, to stand ready to do every duty, not to revile anyone, not to be quarrelsome, but peaceable, displaying toward all classes of men a spirit of gentleness and compassion. For before we became Christians we, too, lived in the folly, disobedience, and moral degradation of the sinful life. But from this wretched life God in his goodness and love rescued us, not by reason of our good deeds, but by his grace working through the cleansing power of his Spirit, bestowed on us in Christ; thus were we saved and assured of eternal life by God's undeserved favor. Trustworthy is this word concerning God's gracious salvation, and of its meaning for conduct and character I wish you to be confidently assured, so that you may teach the believers under your charge to live a good life. These instructions are wholesome and useful; but the vain disputings, speculations, and contentions of the false teachers avoid, for they are utterly profitless. A man who continues to foment discord after being reprimanded a second time, you need not further admonish, since it is evident that he is deliberately sinning with a full consciousness of his guilt, and cannot be recovered.

Gratitude for divine mercy a motive to those duties (3 : 4-7)

Factionalism and disputation to be avoided (3 : 8-11)

When Artemas and Tychicus arrive in Crete, be sure

Personal references (3 : 12-14)

to come and visit me at Nicopolis; for I purpose to spend the winter there. Take pains to equip Zenas and Apollos for their journey, so that they may be provided with whatever they need. And let our fellow-believers in Crete be careful to practise benevolence for the relief of those in want, thereby showing that their faith is living and productive.

Farewell and benediction (3 : 15)

All my companions salute you. Give my greetings to my beloved fellow-Christians. Grace be with you all.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

I

THE QUESTION OF A SECOND IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL

We have seen that there is no place for the Pastoral Epistles in the framework of Paul's life which is furnished by the Book of Acts and his first ten epistles. If they are genuine, either in whole or in part, they must belong to a period subsequent to the imprisonment in Rome described in Acts 28 during which Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians were composed. Was there such a period?

Why the Book of Acts breaks off so abruptly we do not know. It is extremely improbable that it could have been the deliberate design of the author to close his work by saying that during his two years of mild imprisonment the apostle continued his work of preaching and teaching, no one preventing him (Acts 28 : 30, 31). Nor is it likely that the author stopped here because Paul was put to death at the end of the two years mentioned. If this had been the case, it is almost inconceivable that the

writer should not have mentioned the fact. The most reasonable supposition is that in breaking off his narrative of Paul's life so abruptly, Luke did not think of the events mentioned at the end of the narrative as the last in the apostle's career; that is, that Paul's life was prolonged beyond the point to which he had brought down the history of it. If this were so, then it is certainly possible that the messages to Timothy and Titus belong, as they purport to do, in this closing period of the apostle's career.

But we are not wholly dependent upon such uncertain conjectures. We have seen that during the Roman imprisonment just referred to, Paul confidently expected to be very soon set at liberty. He asks Philemon at Colossæ to make ready a lodging for him, for, he adds, he expects soon to visit him (*v.* 22). He expresses to the Philippians the same confident expectation of release (Phil. 1 : 25; 2 : 24). These passages show that during the two years mentioned at the close of Acts, the apostle had what seemed to him good reasons to anticipate a speedy and favorable verdict, and that, in view of these reasons, he had planned to visit the distant regions of Macedonia and Asia Minor. To this it may be answered: We cannot conclude from the fact that a man, and, especially, a prisoner, formed plans of travel that he actually carried them out. We know that Paul many times planned to visit Rome before he wrote the Epistle to the Romans

(Rom. 1 : 13), but was prevented from doing so, and that he changed from time to time his plans of travel after they were definitely formed (2 Cor. 1 : 16, 17). But this answer has little positive weight. The confident expectation of the apostle, on the contrary, does justify the presumption that he was set at liberty. In the absence of the slightest proof or even probability to the contrary, we may say that the reasons which Paul had for predicting a speedy release are presumptive reasons for believing that he was released.

But there is one more consideration bearing on the question. We know that Paul cherished a set purpose to visit Spain (Rom. 15 : 28). We also know that if he ever carried this purpose into effect he must have done so after being released from the imprisonment mentioned in Acts 28. Now, there is an early church tradition to the effect that Paul did visit the extreme West in the prosecution of his missionary labors. This tradition finds expression in the oldest extra-canonical Christian writing, composed about A. D. 95, the Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, which states that the apostle travelled to the bounds of the West [1] (Chs. 5, 6; compare the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans 2 : 2). Within the known life of the apostle he never went further westward than Rome, but the phrase of Clement can hardly refer to Paul's journey to Rome, since Clement himself resided in Rome and wrote his epis-

[1] The phrase which Clement uses is: καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθών.

tle from that city. That a Roman should describe the journey of a Palestinian to Rome as a visit to the bounds of the West is extremely improbable. The phrase used bore a well-defined meaning.[1] We may conclude, then, that, in all probability, Paul was acquitted at his trial which occurred in or about the year 63 and went forth again to his missionary work, and that, later, he was again apprehended and taken to Rome, where he suffered martyrdom as related by the uniform and unquestioned ecclesiastical tradition of early Christian literature. This is a conclusion in which two such eminent and widely diverging scholars as Zahn and Harnack agree.

II

THE APOSTLE'S FAREWELL

There is, then, a place in the life of Paul for the Pastoral Epistles. The question concerning them takes this form: Are their characteristics such as make it reasonable to suppose that Paul composed them during this closing period of his life? We have seen that many difficulties beset this supposition in the case of First Timothy and Titus, and that the theory of an elaboration and adaptation made by a later hand, of notes or memoranda addressed

[1] Students who are interested in the question should consult on this point Zahn's Einleitung in das Neue Testament, i. 447, 448.

by the apostle to these assistants, is gaining favor among scholars. We have now briefly to review Second Timothy.

After the salutation (1 : 1, 2), Timothy is admonished to continue steadfast in the same faith which has sustained the apostle in all his sufferings (1 : 3-14). Then, after some personal references (1 : 15-18), he is again exhorted to courage and constancy (2 : 1-13), and is warned to avoid foolish word-strifes and hurtful errors and to cultivate, instead, the Christian virtues (2 : 14-26). Next, the corrupt men whose errors Timothy is exhorted to avoid and oppose are more particularly described (3 : 1 to 4 : 5), and the exhortation is enforced by a pathetic prediction of the apostle's approaching end (4 : 6-8). Several personal observations and greetings (4 : 9-22) bring the letter to a close.

While Second Timothy shares, in general, the peculiarities which are characteristic of First Timothy and Titus, it is decidedly more orderly, compact, and straightforward in the movement of its ideas and more vigorous and energetic in thought. The pictures given of Timothy's early life and training (1 : 5 ; 3 : 14, 15), and of the apostle's various experiences (1 : 15-18 ; 2 : 9, 10 ; 4 : 6-18), bear all the marks of a sketch from life. There are numerous minor touches, such as the references to Paul's persecutions and personal relations, which are highly realistic. Especially so are such allusions as that to his former trial and its favorable

issue (4 : 16, 17), to the cloak which he left at Troas and which he now needs to defend him from the dampness of his cell, and to the parchment-books with which he might now relieve the tedium of his solitude (4 : 13). The figures of the soldier, the boxer, and the husbandman (2 : 3-6) are all favorite ones with the apostle. The references to ecclesiastical conditions which make it so difficult to refer First Timothy and Titus, in their present form, to the apostle, are almost wholly absent here. Nothing is said of an ascetic Gnosticism, of church-rules, of the discipline of elders, of clergy and laity, of bishop and presbyter, of official lists of widows, or of the church as the chief support of the truth. In short, the epistle makes the impression of a genuine communication of the aged apostle to his beloved disciple, and as such (after allowing for some later additions) an increasing number of scholars regard it.[1] We need not hesitate, then, to look upon this epistle as the swan-song of the great apostle, his pæan of victory over death which Christ had vanquished by bringing life and incorruption to light through the gospel (1 : 10).

[1] It may interest critical students to know that this is the view now taken by Professor Harnack.

III

THE SECOND MESSAGE TO TIMOTHY

1. *Encouragements in Sufferings* (1)

Salutation (1 : 1, 2)

Paul, a messenger of Christ, divinely set apart for the promotion of the gospel, to my dear child Timothy; the favor and blessing of God and of Christ be with you.

Thanksgiving for Timothy's devotion to the apostle and zeal in Christian work (1 : 3-5)

I thank the God of my fathers whom I also faithfully serve, as I constantly remember you in my prayers and think of the tears which you shed at our parting, and eagerly long for the joy of seeing you—I am grateful to God, I say, for the news which I hear, that you are illustrating and reproducing the sincere faith which both your grandmother and your mother possessed. My confidence in your devotion leads me to remind you to put to use the equipment for service which God graciously bestowed upon you at your ordination. For the Spirit which God has given us does not produce timidity, but courage, self-denial, and self-restraint. Do not shrink from defending the gospel of Christ nor from acknowledging your relation to me, his imprisoned apostle, but prove yourself my fellow-sufferer for the gospel, through the grace of God, which will strengthen us for every trial. For to such endurance are we urged by the fact that God has saved us, not because of our deserving, but according to the gracious

All gifts to be bravely used in God's service (1 : 6-14)

purpose which he formed before the world was and which he has now realized in the coming of Christ, who has vanquished death and assured us of a blessed life through the gospel for the proclamation of which I have been divinely commissioned. Therefore do I suffer courageously in the service of Christ, for in him I have an unwavering trust, and rest assured that he will safely keep the sacred trust which I have reposed in him until the day of his appearing. Let the healthful teaching which I have given you serve as your guide in your Christian life and work. Faithfully fulfil your divinely appointed work of preaching and teaching by the help of the Spirit which God gives you.

The apostle's false and true friends (1 : 15-18)

You know how I have been forsaken by all the Asian Christians—among them Phygelus and Hermogenes. The Lord's blessing be upon the household of Onesiphorus, who often comforted me, and did not forsake me because of my imprisonment; but when he came to Rome was all the more careful, on that account, to search me out and visit me—may he meet with favor from Christ at his coming—and of his kind services to me at Ephesus I have no need to tell you.

2. *The Soldierly Quality of the Christian Life* (2 : 1-13)

Unlike those who have proved unfaithful, do you, my spiritual son, prove yourself a courageous champion of

the gospel through the strength which Christ imparts. The good fight of faith (2 : 1-6)
The teachings which you have heard me expound, and which many others have attested, intrust to reliable men, who also have the gift for instructing others. Like myself, you are a soldier of Christ; you must join me in suffering in his service. A soldier must keep himself free from all occupations except those of military duty, in order that he may please his commander. It is not enough for the athlete to take part in the games; if he is to win the prize, he must contend according to the laws of the contest. The farmer who toils hard in tilling the soil has the first right to the product of his labor. Note well the meaning of these illustrations, and the Lord will enable you to apply them in your work. Recall for your The certainty of triumph (2 : 7-13)
encouragement the triumph of Christ, the Son of David, over death—the central truth of that message for whose sake I am imprisoned as an evil-doer; but the gospel itself goes on its way unfettered. Confident in its power and victory, I can patiently endure all manner of hardships, if thereby I may promote the spiritual good and the final salvation of my fellow-believers. It is a trustworthy saying: "If we share Christ's death, we shall share his life; if we share his suffering, we shall share his glory; if we prove false to him, he will disown us; if we are untrue to him, he will still be true to his word, for he cannot act inconsistently with his own nature."

3. *The Christian's Safeguards against False Doctrine and Life* (2 : 14 to 3 : 17)

Fruitless and divisive controversies to be avoided by the Christian (2 : 14-19)

Enjoin upon those under your instruction to be true to Christ, and solemnly warn them to avoid profitless disputes which can only prove destructive to faith. Spare no pains to prove yourself in God's service a well-tested and acceptable worker, correctly teaching and applying the truth of the gospel. But avoid the fruitless disputings of the false teachers, for they will go further and further in their impiety, and their teaching will spread in the church like an eating ulcer. Such men are Hymenæus and Philetus, men who have wandered from the path of truth in teaching that the resurrection is a thing of the past, thereby shaking the confidence of some in a future resurrection. However, the church which God has established stands unshaken, and on its foundations are inscribed the divine declarations: "The Lord knows his own," and "Let those who confess Christ live a righteous life." Now just as in a great mansion some of the utensils are made of costly and some of cheap materials; some for higher and some for lower uses—so in the congregation there will be found both genuine and spurious, both useful and useless, Christians. If now a believer will keep himself free from the companionship of these counterfeit believers, he will prove himself to be a valuable instrument for the Lord's work, always ready for every honorable

Discrimination and earnestness the secrets of successful Christian service (2 : 20-26)

service. Beware of those evil desires to the power of which the young are especially exposed; cultivate the virtues of righteousness, faith, and love, and preserve harmony with all sincere worshippers of our Lord. Avoid senseless and profitless disputings which only engender angry contentions. The Christian minister must not be contentious, but amiable, devoted to teaching, patient, in kindness reproving those who oppose the gospel, in the hope that they may be brought through repentance to a true experience of salvation, and may be saved from the toils of Satan, whose captives, forced to do his bidding, they now are.

The near future to be a time of special peril from false teachers (3 : 1-9)

I would remind you that in the closing days of the present age we must look for special outbreaks of wickedness. Every base and violent passion, every moral corruption and perversion will find expression, and counterfeit piety will abound. Have no fellowship with those who illustrate such wickedness. For it is men of this class who insinuate themselves into houses and captivate weak and base women, who are eager for novelty, but incapable of attaining a real apprehension of divine truth. As the sorcerers Jannes and Jambres sought to hinder the work of Moses, so do these corrupt and faithless men resist the progress of the gospel. But their evil purpose will be foiled, for their senselessness, like that of the magicians, shall be plainly exposed. In contrast to the course of these false teachers, recall the example of my instruction,

Timothy's safety lies in faithfulness and devotion (3: 10-17)

experience, and suffering for the gospel, for those who will be true to Christ must suffer for his sake. Quite different is it with those wicked and self-deceived impostors who plunge into ever deeper depths of wickedness. But do you remain true to the teaching which you received from your parents, and remember how from early youth you were trained in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures which, when read in the light of faith in Christ, are able to show you the true way of salvation. Since all Scripture is divinely inspired, it is useful for increasing our knowledge, for rebuking our sin, and for disciplining us in the religious life, so that the Christian man may be adequately equipped for every service to which he is called.

4. *The Apostle's Solemn Final Charge* (4: 1-8)

Exhortation to faithfulness (4 : 1-8)

I adjure you before God and before Christ, the Judge of all men—yea, in the prospect the Lord's coming to judgment and of his glorious reign, I adjure you to be constant and faithful in your work of preaching, teaching, and admonition. For the days are coming when professing Christians will lose their interest in the healthful gospel of Christ, and with eager and morbid curiosity will run hither and thither after various teachers to please their fickle desires, and will desert the truth and take up with the myths of the false teachers. But do you be prudent, patient, and faithful in your work as a preacher and servant of the Master. For my blood will soon be poured

out in martyrdom; I am on the point of leaving this world to be with the Christ. My conflict is over; I stand at the goal; through all hardships and temptations I have continued loyal to him; nothing now remains for me but to receive the reward of perfect blessedness which our Lord will confer when he comes in judgment and victory —a reward which he will give not to me alone, but to all who have set their hearts on his manifestation and triumph.

5. *Concluding Requests and Greetings* (4:9-22)

Personal requests (4 : 9-13)

Make every effort to visit me soon; for Demas in his desire for earthly good has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Both Crescens and Titus have also gone, and I have only Luke left. Bring Mark with you when you come, for his services are useful to me. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring me the travelling-mantle which I left at Troas; also the papyrus-books, and especially the parchment-rolls. The brass-

Christ's faithfulness to the friendless apostle (4 : 14-18)

founder Alexander did me serious injury; the Lord reward him as he deserves. Be on your guard against him, for he has been a bitter opponent of my teaching. At my first appearance in court no one espoused my cause, but all abandoned me; I pray that God may forgive them. But the Lord Jesus was my helper and gave me courage and boldness, so that the gospel was proclaimed in the capital and the knowledge of it extended to the heathen; and I was saved from the danger which threat-

ened me. And the same faithful Master will save me from all harm and make me a sharer in his celestial glory. To him be praise forever. Amen.

Farewell greetings (4 : 19-22)

My greetings to Prisca and Aquila and to the family of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed at Corinth, and Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. If possible, come to see me before winter comes on. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all my fellow-believers send you their greetings. May the Lord Jesus bless you with his presence! God's grace be with all the congregation!

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

I

THE COURSE OF THOUGHT IN THE EPISTLE

No epistle in the New Testament is characterized by so high a degree of rhetorical art as that to the Hebrews. It is the only epistle of which it can be said that it must have been constructed according to a definite plan, which the author elaborated in advance. The argument, as a whole, is cumulative, and all its details are skilfully marshalled and made to bear upon the writer's main purpose. The structure of the epistle can best be exhibited by giving a brief outline of the course of thought. The author begins with a striking portrayal of Christ's superiority in both his person and his work to the Old Testament prophets (1 : 1-3). His description of the dignity of the Son leads him to the discussion of his first main topic, namely, a comparison of Christ with the angels, by whom, according to popular Jewish belief, the legal system had been introduced (1 : 4 to 2 : 18). For his purpose the writer, here as elsewhere, makes large use of Old Testament passages, cited from the Greek version, which he

skilfully weaves together and interprets according to the method of reading Messianic prophecy which was current in his time. He shows that Christ is called God's Son, while angels are not (1 : 4, 5), that angels are bidden to do him homage (1 : 6), and that they are but the servants of those whom he redeems (1 : 14). Thereupon he pauses in the argument to exhort the readers to be faithful to Christ and his gospel, and solemnly warns them against carelessness and negligence by saying that if disregard of the law which was given by inferior beings, the angels, was punished, how much more severe will be the penalty of neglecting the salvation brought by the Messiah (2 : 1-4). He then resumes and completes the comparison by showing that Christ, though made a little lower than the angels by his sufferings and death, has now been crowned with glory and honor at God's right hand (2 : 5-18). We note here a pervading peculiarity of the epistle, namely, that with each division of the argument is coupled an exhortation to the readers to conform to the conclusion to which the argument leads. Thus, in the present instance, the main thought of the first two chapters is: Since Christ is the Supreme Revealer of God, be true and steadfast in your adherence to him.

The author's second main point is the superiority of Christ to Moses. The latter was, indeed, a faithful servant in God's house; but the position of Christ is not that of a servant, but that of a son (3 : 1-6[a]). Thereupon fol-

lows, largely in Old Testament language adapted to the purpose, the usual exhortation: Since we have a greater leader than Moses, let us not imitate the disobedient Israelites who, refusing his leadership, perished in the desert, but faithfully follow the Captain of our salvation, who will safely lead us into the blessed rest of the heavenly Canaan (3 : 6^{b} to 4 : 16). Here we note another common characteristic of the epistle and an example of the writer's rhetorical art, namely: He introduces into the closing words of his exhortation which is founded on the comparison of Christ with Moses, an anticipatory reference to the topic which he intends next to discuss. In depicting the dignity and leadership of Christ, he alludes, at the close, to his perfect, heavenly priesthood, thus paving the way for the next and most elaborate argument of the epistle, the demonstration that Christ's priesthood is superior to that of the Old Covenant (5 to 12).

This great central section of the epistle falls into several subdivisions. The writer begins by showing that Christ had certain characteristics in common with the Aaronic priests. Like them, he must be a man who can sympathize with and represent those on behalf of whom he ministers. But, on the other hand, unlike them, he does not need to make an offering for his own sins (5 : 1-3). This latter thought is only suggested here in anticipation of a fuller development later (7 : 26-28). Like the Old Testament priests, too, Christ could not

assume the priestly office of himself, but must be divinely appointed to it (5 : 5). And, now, in showing how Jesus perfectly fulfilled all the essentials of that office (5 : 6-10), the writer introduces an anticipative reference to Melchizedek, the mysterious priest-king, who stands as a type of the changeless, eternal priesthood of the Messiah. This comparison of Christ with Melchizedek he afterward develops fully (7). Having thus shown that Christ, the heavenly high-priest, is the perfect Mediator of salvation, he introduces again the constantly recurring warning and exhortation to the readers to persevere and grow in Christian knowledge and virtue and to lay firm hold upon the hope of eternal blessedness offered in the gospel (5 : 11 to 6 : 20).

The author then resumes the comparison of Christ with the Levitical priests, using for his purpose the figure of Melchizedek, who appears so suddenly upon the stage of Old Testament history (Gen. 14 : 18-20), and disappears as mysteriously as he comes (7). From this comparison also the perfection of Christ's priesthood is deduced. The author next shows that Christ's mediation is superior to that of the Old Testament priests because, while they minister in earthly sanctuaries, which are but types or shadows of the true, he ministers in the upper, heavenly temple, the immediate presence of God; and that he is connected with a better covenant than that which God made with the Jewish people, a new covenant superseding the old, in

which an actual and not a mere symbolical purification from sin and cleansing of the conscience takes place (8 : 1 to 10 : 18). This elaborate argument is followed by an equally extended practical section in which the truth developed in the argument is applied (10 : 19 to 13 : 25). Here, as in all the hortatory portions of the epistle, the watchword is: "Be patient, faithful, and obedient in your devotion to Christ and his truth."

II

THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

The aim which the writer had in view has been, in part, already indicated. But the subject must be more specifically considered because of its bearing upon the questions of the destination and readers of the epistle. As we have seen, the contents of the epistle might be divided into (1) the theoretic or argumentative, and (2) the practical or hortatory parts. Then the question may be raised: Which group of passages represent best the main purpose of the epistle? In other words, Is the epistle primarily an argument or an exhortation? Is its immediate purpose to establish a certain view of Christianity or doctrine of salvation, or is it to confirm the readers in devotion to truth which they already know and hold? If the former

theory be held, then the further question arises: Is the writer's aim mainly didactic or apologetic? Is the epistle primarily an exposition or a defence of Christian doctrine?

These questions will meet us again in the next paragraph. Suffice it to say now that the epistle is primarily practical in aim. Its arguments and illustrations are all subordinate to the practical end of confirming the readers in Christian faith and hope. An idea which frequently recurs is: If those who stood upon a lower plane of knowledge and privilege (the Jews) were punished for disobedience and unfaithfulness, how much more severely shall we who possess God's perfect revelation in Christ be punished if we fail in fidelity and steadfastness. The author exhorts the readers not to be content with the rudiments, but to press on toward maturity in Christian life and knowledge (6 : 1). He reproaches them for their lack of progress and exhorts them to zeal and effort. What, now, was the specific nature of the faults which characterized them and of the dangers which threatened their Christian life? Were they inclined to relapse back into Judaism, and was this the peril against which he warned them? Or was it the danger of slackness and indifference in general? These questions can only be answered in the light of additional facts.

III

TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE ADDRESSED?

The usual answer, long current in the church, is: To Jewish Christians, presumably in Palestine or, at any rate, within the province of Syria. The principal arguments for this view are: (1) The title of the epistle is "To the Hebrews," and although this title cannot be proved to have been given by its author to the letter, it is very ancient. (2) All the various arguments of the epistle move in the world of Jewish history and ideas. The comparison of Christ with the prophets, the angels, and Moses, and, especially, the elaborate and detailed argument for the superiority of Christ which is drawn from a description of the Old Testament priesthood, tabernacle, and temple, show that both the writer and the readers were Jewish. (3) The inferiority of Judaism as representing a lower stage of divine revelation, is elaborately portrayed. The only natural explanation of this portrayal is that it had for its purpose to warn the readers not to go back from Christianity to this more elementary and inadequate system. If the readers were not Jewish Christians who were in danger of such a retrogression, this elaborate description and argument would be quite inexplicable. (4) The readers, with the writer, are spoken of as hearers of

the primitive apostles (2 : 3). Such would, most probably, be Jewish Christians.

Quite a different view of the destination of the letter, however, has been adopted by several eminent scholars of our time. It is that the epistle was written without regard to the nationality of the readers; that they were not considered by the author to be in danger of apostatizing to Judaism, and that they probably resided in Rome.[1] The principal grounds for this theory are as follows: (1) The epistle takes no account of the difference between Jew and Gentile, and says nothing against Jewish worship and practices, such as circumcision. The author writes as a Christian to Christians without giving any indication respecting the nationality of his readers. (2) The rudiments of Christian doctrine in which they have remained—repentance from dead works, belief in God and in the resurrection and judgment—fit better the supposition that the readers were Gentiles than they do the theory that they were Jews. The latter would possess these rudiments of religious belief even before their conversion to Christ. (3) The readers are said to have performed works of benevolence to Christians in general (6 : 9, 10), to have endured a special conflict of sufferings (10 : 32), and to have shown sympathy with prisoners (10 : 34). Moreover, the readers are exhorted to consider the "issue of the life" of their

[1] This opinion is advocated, for example, by Jülicher, von Soden, Harnack, and McGiffert.

deceased leaders and to imitate their faith (13 : 7). All these indications point to Rome—to the position and influence, the experience and martyr-death of believers residing in the world's capital. (4) The salutation which the Italian Christians send by the writer to the readers (13 : 24) is most naturally explained if the letter was destined for Italy, that is, in all probability, for Rome. Harnack suggests that the epistle was addressed to some particular limited circle of believers in Rome—probably to some household-congregation such as Paul mentions in First Corinthians 16 : 19; Romans 16 : 5, and Colossians 4 : 15.

These considerations certainly present some difficulty in accepting the traditional view that our epistle was really written "to the Hebrews." But are they as strong as the counter arguments? Does the fact, for example, that our author does not speak against circumcision or attendance upon the synagogue prove anything? He might argue against a reversion to Judaism without mentioning such particulars. And if he was writing to some special group of Jewish Christians, what occasion need he have to take account of the differences between Jewish and Gentile Christians? The arguments for the Roman destination of the letter are almost wholly built upon details in the epistle—minor traits, like the salutation of the Italians and the compassion of the readers for prisoners, which may, indeed, suggest Rome, but are not of great weight when

placed over against the elaborate portrayal of the Jewish system and the cumulative argument to prove the superiority of the gospel to Leviticalism. These are the great outstanding peculiarities of the letter, which require explanation. The minor traits mentioned create difficulty mainly in consequence of our lack of information respecting the situation of the writer and the readers. In some instances, the Roman theory builds upon very doubtful inferences. For example: Assuming, with most interpreters, that "the issue of their life" (13:7) refers to the martyr-death of the readers' former church-rulers, it would not in the least follow that Peter and Paul were especially meant, much less that the readers resided where these apostles suffered martyrdom.

The common theory, on the other hand, rests upon the general character and contents of the epistle. The Jewish cast of the whole exposition, its consequent fitness and adaptation to Jewish minds, and the note of warning which seems to sound through all the arguments and exhortations (see, for example, 3:12; 4:1, 11; 6:6; 12:18ff.) by which the writer would strengthen his readers' adherence to Christ, not only gave rise in the early church to the title "To the Hebrews," but have convinced the great majority of scholars ever since that the epistle was designed for Jewish readers, probably in Palestine or Syria.[1]

[1] So, *e.g.*, Weiss, Godet, Westcott, Hort, Bruce, Beyschlag. Zahn holds that the letter was addressed to Jewish Christians resident in Rome.

It would seem singularly gratuitous for a writer to argue the case for Christianity in comparison with Judaism at such length for readers who had never adhered to Judaism and felt no attraction to it. The opinion that the letter was primarily practical, rather than theoretical, in aim, however, is consistent with either hypothesis respecting its destination.

IV

THE PROBLEMS OF AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

Hebrews has been handed down to us as a Pauline epistle. It does not, however, claim the apostle as its author. The tradition that Paul wrote it arose from the fact that it exhibits a general kinship to the Pauline type of thought. Like Paul, the author has much to say of the imperfect and preparatory character of the Old Testament system and of the completeness and sufficiency of the gospel. But, closely considered, these subjects are seen to be treated in very different ways by the two writers, while, in language, style, and mode of thought and methods of argument, the writer of Hebrews differs widely from Paul. It is quite certain that the epistle was not written by Paul.

But who, then, was the writer? This question has opened a wide field for learned guessing. The epistle has been assigned to every person known to us from the

New Testament who, by any possibility, could have written it—to Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy, Silas, not to mention others. That Barnabas was the writer was asserted by Tertullian, and many modern scholars have favored this opinion. Barnabas was a man of apostolic rank (Acts 14 : 4, 14), a Hellenist from Cyprus, a Levite, and an honored member of the Jerusalem church. As such, it is said, he might most naturally write such a letter of warning and exhortation to his fellow-believers in Palestine or Syria.

The Apollos hypothesis, however, which was adopted by Luther, has met with still more general favor. Apollos is known to us as a cultured, rhetorical Alexandrian, well versed in the Greek Old Testament (Acts 18 : 24 ff. ; compare 1 Cor. 2 : 1-5). These qualifications would account for the elaborate style, the Alexandrian cast, the kinship with Philo and the Book of Wisdom, and the free use of the Septuagint in the epistle, while the relation of Apollos to Paul would explain the general agreement of the epistle with Pauline doctrine. On the other hand, it must be said that if either of these prominent men had written the epistle, it is very strange that the name of the author should so soon have been forgotten. We have no evidence that Barnabas possessed the literary culture displayed in the epistle, and Apollos was not a disciple of the primitive apostles (2 : 3).

Professor Harnack, in a recently established journal for

New Testament studies, has elaborated the theory that the epistle was written by Priscilla. This view presupposes the Roman destination of the epistle. Harnack reminds us that the author was well acquainted with Timothy (13:23), was closely associated with the apostles, though not himself an apostle (2 : 3), and must, therefore, have been a prominent Christian worker. He further calls attention to the fact that in every passage in which Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned by either Luke (Acts 18 : 18, 26) or Paul (Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19), the name of Priscilla stands first. This fact seems to indicate that she was more effective and influential as a teacher than her husband. Harnack thinks that the early disappearance of the writer's name is most naturally explained on the supposition that the epistle was written by a woman, since it is well known that the position of women became much less prominent in the post-apostolic age than it had been in the early days of the Church. In consequence of the disfavor with which the idea of a woman acting as a teacher came to be regarded, nothing was said by those who highly esteemed the epistle respecting the writer, and thus her name fell out of all connection with her striking message to her household congregation. Finally, the writer often speaks in such a way as to show that another was closely united with him (or rather, on Harnack's view, with *her*) in sending the message. He says : "Pray for *us*" (13:18); "And *I* exhort you" (13·19); "*Our* brother

Timothy" (13 : 23); "*I* will see you" (13 : 23; compare the "we" passages, 6 : 3, 9, 11), etc. It is held that Paul's Jewish-Roman co-laborers, Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16 : 3; 1 Cor. 16 : 9), would best correspond to these various indications respecting the personality and relations of the writer.

This theory has met with little favor among scholars. The considerations which are urged in its favor are outweighed by the improbability that a Jewish-Roman woman in Rome, a weaver of tent-cloth, should have possessed such a rhetorical training, and such an acquaintance with the Alexandrian philosophy of religion as are displayed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is vain, indeed, to claim more than a conjectural value for any of the suppositions which have been advanced concerning the authorship of our epistle. We must still abide by the verdict of Origen. "Who it was that really wrote the epistle, God only knows."

The date, too, is uncertain. Most scholars who hold that the epistle was addressed to Roman Christians place it within the reign of Domitian (A. D. 81-96). The more common view is that it was written during the years 65-70.[1] The principal argument for the earlier date is that the vivid and detailed portrayal of the Levitical cultus implies that it was a present reality and was exerting a

[1] Harnack admits that the epistle may be earlier than Domitian's time, and Zahn assigns it to "about 80."

powerful attractive force upon the readers. On the contrary, it is argued that the use made of this cultus is illustrative only and that the writer uses the tabernacle for this purpose as freely as the temple. If, it is said, we are to argue from his references to the temple, that the temple was still standing, we should be required to suppose that the description of the tabernacle also implied its continued existence. While it is true that we may not conclude from specific references to the temple that the letter antedated the year 70, it is difficult to resist the impression that the picture of the sacrificial system as a whole is not one drawn from memory, but one taken from life. If our author was not writing for Jews and depicting a still existing system of worship, we must say that his illustrations and arguments drawn from that system and composing fully half of his epistle, are singularly far-fetched and inapposite.

V

THE MESSAGE TO THE HEBREWS

1. *Christ's Superiority to the Angels* (1, 2)

The supremacy of Christ (1 : 1-4)

In ancient times God partially revealed himself by various methods to the Jewish people through men specially chosen to declare his will; in these closing days of the present age he has revealed himself to us in no less a

person than his Son. To this Son, his agent in the world's creation, God has given supreme and universal dominion. In him shines forth the radiant glory of God; he bears the impress of the divine nature; his will supports the order of the world. When, now, he had finished his redeeming work for man, God exalted him to the seat of honor and power. By this exaltation it was shown that to him belonged a higher dignity than had ever been accorded to the angels, for he bears the high title of Son, which is not given to them. In the Old Testament we do not find Jehovah represented as applying this title to angels; but he does apply it to the Messiah. Moreover, the angels are bidden by Jehovah to render homage to Christ, when he shall return to earth in glory and triumph. Messiah's superiority to the angels is further recognized in the Old Testament. They are there likened to the swift and subtle powers of nature; but prophets speak of Christ as possessing supreme and universal dominion. Their language could be applied to no angel. Further: The creation of the world and perpetuity of life are attributed to him; Jehovah describes him as occupying the seat of authority and wielding the sceptre of dominion over all foes; while to the angels of every rank is assigned the humble position of ministering in the interest of those who are to become partakers of his salvation.

Neither his titles nor his authority can be attributed even to angels (1 : 5-14)

Since Christ is so superior to the angels in office and authority, we ought to hear and obey his message with

even greater reverence than is due to the law which angels introduced. We all know how severely God punished all disobedience to the law given on Sinai; with how much greater rigor will he treat indifference to the clearer and fuller revelation of his will in Christ—a saving revelation, which was presented, in the first instance, in the teaching of the Lord Jesus himself, and was then securely transmitted to us by his immediate disciples. This message of salvation through his Son, God attested by miracles and by bestowing upon those who received it such spiritual endowments as suited his gracious purpose.

His teaching superior to the law introduced by angels (2 : 1-4)

There is a further proof of Christ's superiority to the angels: God has not accorded to them dominion over the coming Messianic age. But has he granted it to Christ? Let us see. One Scripture writer does, indeed, speak of man's weakness, insignificance, and inferiority to the angels, but, notwithstanding this, he goes on to assert that God has exalted him to a place of dominion and authority. The language used is very strong; he describes his sovereignty as extending to "all things." But we do not yet see man exercising any such dominion as is here described. This exaltation is realized only in Christ. In him is fulfilled both the humiliation and the exaltation of which the Psalmist speaks—the former by his stooping to suffer the death of the cross, the latter by his glorification. Now the temporary humiliation of Christ below the angels is no argument against his real supremacy over

The superior authority and dominion of Christ (2 : 5-8)

His humiliation a step toward his exaltation (2 : 9-16)

them. It was a necessary condition of his accomplishing his saving work for man that he should pass through a career of suffering. For both Saviour and saved have a common Father — God ; hence the Saviour does not scruple to address men as his brothers, expressing, in common with them, his trustful dependence on Jehovah, and naming himself as the elder brother of the children of God. Since the men whom he came to save were possessed of a weak and perishable nature, he also himself took upon him human frailty, in order that by himself submitting to death he might render powerless him who introduced death into the world, that is, Satan, and might free men from their perpetual bondage to the fear of death. For, indeed, he did not come to earth to save angels, but men. Therefore it was necessary that he should enter into human conditions and limitations, in order that he might fulfil his priestly office of atonement on behalf of the people, in perfect sympathy with all their sin and need. For since he has himself passed through a career of moral trial, he is able to help those who are undergoing temptation.

Thus he became our perfect High Priest (2 : 17, 18)

2. *Christ's Superiority to Moses* (3 : 1 to 4 : 16)

In view of the position and purpose of Christ which have been described, do you, fellow-members of the Christian commonwealth, give careful heed to him who has introduced and ratified the new gospel dispensation,

namely, Jesus, who has as faithfully accomplished his divinely given mission on behalf of man, as did Moses his work as a leader of the people of God. But to Christ, God has assigned a dignity and authority as much higher than that given to Moses as the position of one who organizes and regulates a household is higher than that of the servants within it. Now just as every household must have some administrator in charge of it, so must God's spiritual household; and it is God himself who presides over his family and, in various periods, gives to one and another his position and function within it. Now, in thus arranging for the administration of his household, God made Moses a servant, and he faithfully performed the service of bearing testimony to truths which were to be more fully revealed through Christ; but to Christ he gave the authority which belongs to a Son, placing him in complete control of his spiritual family—of which we are members, if we persevere in our loyalty to Christ and in our confident expectation of his kingdom, until his coming. Now the Scripture describes the indifference and disobedience of the people under the leadership of Moses, in consequence of which Jehovah declared that they should not enter the promised land. Therefore, do you, my Christian brethren, beware of disloyalty and disobedience to One who possesses so much higher a dignity and authority than Moses had. Be warned of the dangers of unfaithfulness, in this your day of opportunity; lest

The position of Christ in the kingdom of God compared with that of Moses (3 : 1-6)

Warnings against disloyalty and disobedience to Christ (3 : 7-19)

any of you be seduced by sin into disloyalty to Christ. For we shall share in blessed fellowship with Christ if we persevere in trusting him till his coming. Heed, then, the solemn warning against unfaithfulness which was given to the Israelites, and do not repeat the sin of which they were guilty in the wilderness. But how general was the disobedience of which I have spoken? Was it not universal? And was not God angry with Israel for her sins in consequence of which so many perished in the desert? And did not God utter a solemn oath that these faithless people should not see the promised land? Thus we see that it was unfaithfulness which prevented them from entering Canaan, and we should beware of repeating their experience.

The promise of rest and blessedness fulfilled through Christ (4 : 1-10)

The failure of the Jews, through their unbelief, to enter the promised land should be a warning to us, lest we, like them, should fail to attain the proffered peace and blessedness of Christ's kingdom. For we Christians have had a divine promise of rest proclaimed to us, as the Jews did through Moses; they did not heed the message addressed to them, but received it only with incredulity. Let us not follow their example. We conclude that the rest of God was destined to be realized by the followers of Christ; the Jews were excluded from it, as the Psalmist says, although it was fully prepared and waiting from the creation of the world. For that there was a Sabbath rest of God from the beginning is implied in the Scriptural word about

God's resting after creation, and in the refusal of God to permit the Jewish people to enjoy it. The case stands thus: God has prepared a Sabbath rest for his people; the Jews by their faithlessness forfeited it; yet the Psalm which speaks of the "to-day" of opportunity, and warns against disobedience, implies that the rest in question is still available. For if the Jewish people under Joshua had realized the real rest of God, the Scripture, so long afterward, would not have spoken of it as still unentered and unenjoyed, as the Psalmist does when he proclaims another "to-day" of God's favor. We therefore conclude that this rest has been reserved till now, and is available for believers in the Messiah. Such a blessed repose in Christ's kingdom as I speak of is possible for us, for whoever enters the rest of God rests from the toils and labors of his life as God rested after creation. Such being the glorious prospect which is open to us, let us beware of disobedience and failure. For God's requirements are strict and severe. His messages and commandments are living and effective, and they pierce and search the inmost recesses of our life. None can escape his all-seeing eye; all unbelief and disobedience are perfectly known by him to whom we are accountable.

Faithfulness to God's commands essential to its fulfilment (4 : 11-13)

Since, then, we have so exalted a Mediator, Jesus, our risen and glorified Lord, let us continue loyal and faithful to him. For though he is so highly exalted, yet he is full of compassionate feeling for our weaknesses; he has

An assurance of Christ's gracious helpfulness (4 : 14-16)

passed through a full course of moral trial like our own, without yielding to sin. We may therefore fearlessly approach his heavenly seat in the assurance that he will receive us with favor and will strengthen us to resist and overcome the power of evil when we are tempted.

3. *His Qualifications for the Priestly Office* (5 : 1-10)

The qualities essential for a priest (5 : 1-4)

The priest who is to intercede with God on behalf of men and to offer sacrifices in atonement for sin, must himself be a man; he must be able to sympathize with men in their weakness and sin, because he is himself acquainted by experience with human frailty, and on this account he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for those of others. Moreover, the priest must not assume his office, but must take it by appointment from God as Aaron did. Now Christ fulfilled these conditions of the priestly office; he did not grasp the honor of the priesthood, but God who, in Scripture, is described as exalting him to his Messianic throne and as attributing to him a perpetual priesthood, appointed him to the office. He also fulfilled the first condition of exercising the priestly office by enduring, in his human life, the severest trials and sufferings, by which he was disciplined in obedience to the will of God, perfectly fitted for his work as Saviour of men, and exalted to the dignity of a perpetual priesthood.

Christ's perfect possession of them (5 : 5-10)

4. *Christ a Priest of a Higher Order than the Aaronic Priests* (5 : 10 to 7 : 28)

These deeper aspects of Christ's work commended to the reader's attention (5 : 11-14)

It is difficult to make plain to you the meaning of this priestly office of Christ because of your immaturity in Christian knowledge. For although you have been Christians long enough to have become the instructors of others, you need yourselves to be instructed in the very elements of Christian doctrine; you are mere children in the apprehension of the gospel. For he who can receive only the rudiments of Christian teaching is a mere child in understanding. But the deeper mysteries of our faith are appreciated only by the mature Christian who is trained in discriminating between what is useful and what is worthless in religious teaching.

An exhortation to effort and progress (6 : 1-8)

Let us leave behind this elementary stage of Christian knowledge and go on toward maturity; let us cease to limit our attention to those primary truths in which, by this time, we should all be well instructed. And this progress to higher stages of knowledge we shall achieve —with God's blessing. I exhort you the more earnestly to make this progress, because if you do not go forward you are in danger of going backward and forsaking Christ altogether. I warn you that if, after having made a beginning in the Christian life, as you have done, you now desert the gospel, you will find no other means of salvation; you will be treating with contempt the only One

who is able to save you. You will but show how thankless you are—like the soil which heaven blesses with frequent showers and which brings forth only briers in return.

And to increased devotion to Christ (6 : 9-12)

But though I thus warn you against deserting the gospel, I do not believe, my brethren, that you will thus renounce your allegiance to Christ. You have shown, and are still showing, your love to God by your services done to his people, and he will bless and reward you for this. I trust you will persevere in your Christian faithfulness and confidence, and that with God's faithful people you may share in the blessedness of Messiah's kingdom at his coming.

The Gospel-promise confirmed by a solemn oath of God (6 : 13-20)

When God assured Abraham of a numerous posterity, he confirmed his promise by a most solemn oath taken in the name of his sacred honor. Abraham confidently believed the promise, and it came true. His promises to us are equally sure. For as men make their oaths, by which they would confirm their statements, in the name of someone greater than themselves, so God, in order to give the most absolute assurance to his people, confirmed his promise by an oath. Thus he has given us a double assurance, by his promise and by his oath, in order that we who have placed our hope of salvation in Christ might be kept secure in our confidence, as a ship is held by its anchor. Let this steadfast hope bind us to that spiritual and heavenly world into which Jesus, our Advocate and Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, has now entered.

That Christ's priesthood is fitly typified by that of Mel-

chizedek is seen in the fact that in the name of Jehovah this royal priest pronounced a blessing upon Abraham, the head of the Jewish nation, and received from him, as an expression of honor and homage, tithes of the chief spoils of war. This fitness is also seen in the meaning of the priest's name, "king of righteousness," and in the meaning of the name of his city, "Peace." The parallel extends further: Melchizedek suddenly appears on the field of Old Testament history, and as suddenly disappears—a priest, not by descent, but by some higher right, suggesting the priesthood of him whose office is bound up with his essential, changeless life.

Melchizedek a type of Christ (7 : 1-3)

Reflect, now, upon the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood, as compared with that of the Levites. They, indeed, receive tithes from those who, like themselves, are sons of Abraham and who are therefore equal to them in rank, and thus have a certain relative pre-eminence accorded to them; but Melchizedek, whose priesthood did not rest upon human descent, received tithes from the great patriarch himself and took the part of a superior in pronouncing blessing upon him. Moreover, the Levitical priests are subject to death, but of the death of Melchizedek the Old Testament says nothing. Yes, I may even say that, in a certain sense, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, for Levi, though yet unborn, may be regarded as rendering homage to Melchizedek in the person of his ancestor Abraham.

The superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood to that of the Levitical priests (7 : 4-10)

Christ's perpetual and heavenly priesthood (7 : 11-25)

We have further proof of the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood: If that priesthood, on which the whole Old Testament system was based, could have secured the end which it proposed—the reconciliation of men with God—then no other priesthood would have been needed; but it could not; that priesthood must therefore give place to another. Now, since the whole system rested upon the priesthood, the change in the priesthood must involve the abrogation of the whole system. How radical this change was is seen in the fact that the new priest, Christ, comes from another tribe than that of Levi and rests his claims on wholly different grounds from those of descent. And that with this change in the priesthood the whole Mosaic economy disappears, is still further evident from the fact that the new priest is of a different order from the old, and that his office rests upon a unique basis. He was not made priest by a rule or statute, but in virtue of an inherent, imperishable life; accordingly his priesthood is described as changeless and perpetual. Thus the old, imperfect, priestly institution passes away, and with it the system of which it was a part; and we see that a secure hope of attaining the goal contemplated by the law is first attained under Christianity. Moreover, the superiority of Christ's priesthood, as compared with that of the Levitical priests, is shown by the fact that he, unlike them, was declared a priest by the solemn oath of Jehovah; it follows that the covenant under which he ministers is far superior

to the Old Testament system. Another point of difference is that the Levitical priests stand in an order of succession and are subject to death, while Christ's office is grounded in his immutable life. This qualification enables him to complete the work of salvation for all who accept his mediation, since his ministrations on their behalf are uninterrupted.

Christ the sinless priest who makes one final offering (7 : 26-28)

For the completion of our salvation we needed the ministrations in the heavenly sanctuary of such a perfect priest as Christ is—one who does not need, as the Levitical priests do, to offer sacrifices for his own sins as well as for those of others, nor, like them, to repeat his sacrifice over and over again ; for the priests of Judaism were frail and sinful men, while the priest of the New Covenant whom Jehovah has appointed by his oath is a Son, perfectly fitted for his saving work.

5. *Christ the Minister and Exponent of the New Spiritual Covenant* (8 : 1 to 10 : 18)

Christ ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, in the immediate presence of God (8 : 1-5)

A leading point in my whole argument respecting the superiority of Christ's priesthood is that he officiates, not in this lower, earthly temple, like the Levitical priests, but in the upper, heavenly sanctuary. I speak of Christ as a ministering priest ; now the very meaning of a priest is one who offers sacrifices ; wherefore Christ must offer a sacrifice. Now it cannot be on earth that he fulfils this priestly function, because the priestly office on earth is

already filled; it must be in the upper, spiritual tabernacle that he ministers — the true sanctuary, of which the Mosaic tabernacle, whose construction Jehovah directed, was but a typical representation. This heavenly priesthood is as much superior to its earthly counterpart as the New Covenant with which it is connected is superior, in the hopes and blessings which it offers, to the Old Covenant. For if the Old Testament system had been perfect, it would not have been supplanted by a new dispensation. But it was not, and its imperfection is recognized by its own representatives, the prophets, who describe Jehovah as promising his people a New Covenant, which shall be different from that which he gave them on Mount Sinai. The marks of this new order which Jehovah promised are, that it shall be a system of inner law rather than of outer law, that it shall aim at making the knowledge of Jehovah universal, and that it shall be a dispensation of grace and forgiveness. Now, when the coming of a new system is thus foretold, it is evident that the speedy abrogation of the old is implied; and if the prophet, so long ago, could speak of this change as imminent, we must conclude that by this time it is near its consummation.

As predicted, the law is being supplanted by the new spiritual covenant in Christ (8 : 6-13)

Now the Old Testament system had its various arrangements for worship and its visible earthly sanctuary. The tabernacle in the wilderness consisted of two parts: an outer one, called the holy place, and an inner one,

The sacrificial system imperfect and temporary (9 : 1-10)

called the most holy place, each with its appropriate arrangements and furnishings, which it does not now concern us to describe in detail. This being the construction of the tabernacle, the priests were allowed at all times to enter the outer court and offer their sacrifices, but into the innermost part only the high-priest could enter, and he but once a year, when he made atonement for his own sins and for those of the congregation. Now this arrangement by which the most holy place was made so inaccessible was a symbolic expression of the fact that, under the old system, free access into the immediate presence of God was not yet permitted, and that the perfect religion had not yet been introduced. The sacrifices which were offered under the old covenant bore in themselves the marks of their imperfection; they were outward and temporary, and could not cleanse and renew the heart.

Christ has realized the ideal of the Old Testament system (9 : 11-22)

Now, the ideal religion toward which the Mosaic economy pointed, Christ has introduced. His ministry on our behalf is not performed in an earthly and temporary sanctuary, but in the heavenly temple, in the immediate presence of God. The sacrifice which he has offered was not that of animals, but that of his own life, and in the heavenly world he is now acting as the Mediator of our salvation. For if the sacrifice of animals was accepted, under the old covenant, as accomplishing a ceremonial cleansing, how much more shall the perfect spiritual sacri-

fice of the spotless Christ accomplish the real purification of the inner life. By means of this perfect sacrifice Christ has introduced a new order, which, by reason of the efficacy of his death for those who lived under the imperfect Jewish dispensation, is able to secure the perfect salvation of all God's people. This death of Christ was necessary, for a testament [1] is only rendered valid and put into effect by the testator's death. Accordingly, we find much said about death in connection with the old covenant; in fact, death by the shedding of blood is a constant factor in the carrying out of that system and an essential characteristic of its worship.

Christ's perfect sacrifice (9 : 23-28)

These considerations emphasize, by analogy, the necessity of Christ's death. As the lower sanctuary, the symbol of the true, was ceremonially purified by sacrifice, so the most holy place on high must be made ready and accessible for believers by the perfect sacrifice of Christ. For Christ's priestly ministry is performed, not in an earthly sanctuary, but in the very presence of God himself; nor does he need to repeat his sacrifice, as the Jewish high-priest did; for had his priesthood been like theirs, his death would have needed to occur many times during the course of human history; but since his priest-

[1] There is here a play on the word διαθήκη—which may mean either covenant or testament. The writer uses the word in the former sense except in 9 : 16, 17, where he passes over to the other meaning, which was better adapted to the purpose of his argument.

hood is so superior, it was only necessary that he should make one final and effectual sacrifice for sins. And just as men die but once, and thereafter follows, not another death, but judgment, so Christ has died once for the sins of mankind, and when he comes to earth again, he will not come to die a second time, but to complete for his followers the work of their salvation.

The old covenant fulfilled in the new (10 : 1-18)

Since the Jewish sacrificial system deals only with types of the true, spiritual realities, it is evident that it could not, by its repeated ministrations, complete the salvation of those who participated in its rites. The perpetual repetition of its sacrifices is itself a proof that it could not effectually and permanently accomplish its object. The fact that every year, on the great day of atonement, confession of sin was made, shows that the people had not attained the full consciousness of pardon. And, no wonder, for, in the nature of the case, animal sacrifices could not purify the moral life. Accordingly, we find the Scripture describing Christ's work as consisting, not in burnt sacrifices, but in the sacrifice of perfect obedience to God. The old method of approach to God he has set aside, and has opened the new path of obedience by which we are fully forgiven and sanctified. How great the difference! In the Old Testament we see the priests constantly repeating these ineffectual sacrifices, whereas under the new dispensation we see Christ offering one final sacrifice for sin and then taking his heavenly throne and carrying to completion his

saving work. For by one effectual sacrifice he has provided a perfect salvation for those who believe on him. How plainly are the greatness and sufficiency of this saving work pictured in the prophet's proclamation of forgiveness and moral renewal as the chief characteristics of the gospel! Now where these results are attained, there can be no further occasion for expiatory offerings.

6. *The Perils of Apostasy* (10 : 19-39)

Exhortation to confidence and steadfastness in the Christian life (10 : 19-25)

Since, now, the immediate presence of God, the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, has been made accessible to us by the rending of the veil of the Saviour's flesh, and since he now officiates as priest on our behalf in the heavenly temple, let us come to God in all sincerity and confidence, since we have been purified from sin by the perfect sacrifice and consecrated to God in baptism. And let us steadfastly adhere to the assurance of salvation given us in Christ, for this promise of God will not fail of its fulfilment. And let us seek to promote in one another the spirit of brotherhood and of benevolence; especially let us not cease our regular attendance upon the meetings of the Christian assembly, as some are doing, but encourage one another in the Christian life, the more so as the day of the Lord's coming draws near.

For if we deliberately abandon the true way of salvation which Christ has opened to us through his death, we shall find no other means of deliverance; after such an apostasy

there will remain for us only the terrible prospect of the divine judgment, when God's fiery indignation will consume his foes. The law of Moses summarily punished apostasy—when attested by two or three witnesses—by the penalty of death; how much more terrible will be the penalty which he shall deserve who has treated the Saviour with contempt, despised, as if it were impure, his holy sacrifice, and scorned the work of the divine Spirit in the Church. The penalty of such disobedience cannot be escaped, for in the Scripture Jehovah solemnly declares that he will punish his foes and vindicate his people, and it is a terrible thing to expose one's self to his punitive judgment.

If the readers desert Christ they will find no other Saviour (10 : 26-31)

Remember how in the first days of your Christian life you patiently suffered persecution for your faith, both by enduring abuses and assaults, which exposed you to public contempt, and through your efforts for the alleviation of the sufferings of your fellow-believers. Such was your devotion to Christ at that time that you actively sympathized with those who were imprisoned for Christ's sake and cheerfully submitted to the plundering of your property, being sustained by the thought that you had a precious and eternal inheritance in heaven. Do not now forsake this zealous and courageous Christian confession which carries with it the assurance of eternal blessedness. For steadfast endurance is necessary, in order that when you have proved yourselves faithful to the divine require-

Believers must be ready to suffer, if need be, for their faith (10 : 32-34)

The reward of faithful endurance (10 : 35-39)

ments, you may enter into the possession of the promised blessing. For soon the Lord will come, and then the steadfast devotion of the faithful believer shall prove his passport to eternal life, but the apostate God will reject. I am confident, however, that you and I, my readers, do not belong to that class who renounce the gospel and so forfeit their salvation, but are among those who are persevering in loyalty to Christ and will inherit the promised blessedness.

7. *The Triumphs of Faith* (11)

Examples from the Old Testament showing how faith inspires hope for the future (11 : 1-3)

Now this trust in God's promises of which I speak, is a firm confidence that what is hoped for will come to pass, the assured conviction of the existence of invisible realities. It was just this inner persuasion for which the Old Testament saints were distinguished. It is only by a conviction concerning the unseen that we are able to believe in the creation of the world by the power of God, whereby the visible order came into existence without being made from pre-existing materials. It was because Abel had faith that God estimated his offering as more worthy than Cain's, and, looking with favor upon his sacrifice, pronounced him accepted; and by his faithful example, though dead, Abel still summons us to imitate him. It was by reason of his faith that Enoch was taken up alive to heaven. The Scripture declares that his life was well-pleasing to God; he must therefore have had faith, for without faith one cannot be well-pleasing to God, for he

Abel (11 : 4)

Enoch (11 : 5, 6)

who approaches God in worship must believe that he exists, and that he will bless and save those who seek his favor. It was through the exercise of faith that Noah, being divinely instructed concerning future events and in devout trust in God's word, made ready an ark for the salvation of his family, by which trust in God he set the wickedness of the world in clearer light by contrast with his own conduct, and acquired the title of one who was accepted with God in accordance with his faith. Moved by faith, Abraham, when God summoned him, went forth to seek a home in an unknown land. With persistent confidence in God he remained a stranger in the land which had been promised him as a possession, being without a permanent home in the country, along with his family, to whom the divine promise also related; for his hope was set, not on an earthly dwelling-place, but on the heavenly city of God. In consequence of her faith, Sarah, who had been unbelieving, was divinely empowered in her old age to bear a son, because she believed that God would keep his promise, in fulfilment of which there has been born to Abraham, notwithstanding his advanced age, a posterity as countless as the stars in the sky or the sands on the sea-shore. It was in keeping with their confidence in God that Abraham and his family, although they died without having themselves received the blessings which had been promised them, yet beheld and rejoiced in them as certain to be fulfilled in the distant future, and

Noah (11 : 7)

Abraham (11 : 8-10)

Sarah (11 : 11, 12)

The family of Abraham (11 : 13-16)

regarded this world as but their temporary dwelling-place. For those who take this view of the present life do certainly show thereby that their expectations are fixed upon a permanent home beyond. If now in calling themselves but temporary sojourners, they had referred to their absence from the former home which they had left, they might easily have returned to it. But since they did not refer to that earthly country, it is evident that they were longing for a heavenly home, on which account God owns them as his children, for he has prepared them a home in heaven in which all their longings will be satisfied.

Examples showing that faith is the great motive of endurance and achievement: Abraham (11 : 17-19)

It was through the power of faith that Abraham, when he was put to the test, offered to God his son Isaac as a sacrifice; yes, it was because he implicitly trusted God's word that he was willing to sacrifice his only son, the child of promise, through whom God had assured him that his numerous posterity should be founded. He reasoned that if it were necessary to the fulfilment of this promise, God would even raise Isaac from the dead, and, indeed, in rescuing him from imminent death, God did, as it were, raise him up from the dead. Through faith, Isaac, in his dying benediction upon his sons, declared with confidence what should be their future lot and relations. By faith, Jacob, in his last hours, pronounced his blessing upon Joseph's two sons, forecasting their destinies, and, supporting himself in his weakness upon his staff, reverently thanked God for his goodness. It was faith which moved

Isaac (11 : 20)

Jacob (11 : 21)

Joseph, when his death drew near, to speak of God's promise to deliver Israel from Egypt, and to give direction concerning the removal of his body to Canaan. It was the belief of Moses' parents that God had some great purpose to serve in the life of the beautiful child, which led them to conceal him for safety during three months, and this they did in direct opposition to Pharaoh's command. It was due to his faith in God that Moses, when he grew up, disdained the honor and power which might have been his as the reputed son of a royal princess, preferring to share the hardships of God's people rather than to enjoy the temporary sinful pleasures of Pharaoh's court; for he judged that to suffer for righteousness' sake, as Christ did, was a far greater good than to possess all the wealth of Egypt, because his eye was fixed upon the promised heavenly blessedness. It was faith which led him to flee from Egypt, confident that God would save him from the king's wrath; for the clear conviction of God's presence made him strong and courageous. Through trust in God's promise he observed the passover and sprinkled the door-posts with blood in order that the destroying angel should not smite the children of God's people. It was in consequence of their faith that the Israelites were enabled to pass through the Red Sea as on dry land, while the Egyptians, in the effort to pursue them, were overwhelmed. It was due to faith on the part of Israel that God overturned the walls of Jericho after

Joseph (11 : 22)

Moses' parents (11 : 23)

Moses (11 : 24-28)

The Israelites (11 : 29, 30)

the people had marched around them daily for seven days.

Rahab (11 : 31)

It was Rahab's belief in God which saved her, through the friendly reception of the spies, from the fate of the inhabitants of Jericho, who refused to open their city to the Israelites. But why continue the enumeration of examples?

The victories of faith (11 : 32-40)

It would take too long to describe all the heroes of faith, such as the judges and the prophets, and to recount their great achievements in war and in government, or to describe the way in which God has blessed them and delivered them from the greatest personal dangers, and given them victory over their foes in battle. To believing women their dead have been restored alive; others suffered as martyrs, refusing to obtain their liberty by renouncing their faith, because their hope was set on the coming heavenly blessedness. By every form of trial and suffering was the faith of others tested; they endured hunger, nakedness, and homelessness, being treated as unworthy to live in this evil world, which was really unworthy of their presence in it. And all these, although attested in Scripture as examples of faith, failed of realizing the promise of the Messianic kingdom, since God had determined that we of the later time should also share, with them, in the glorious consummation.

8. *Concluding Instructions and Exhortations* (12, 13)

Since then so great a company of the heroes of faith are observing us, to see whether we prove steadfast, let us

throw off every hindrance to our success in the Christian race and discard the evil which so effectually prevents our progress, and run with perseverance our appointed course, with our eyes fixed upon Jesus, our perfect example of faithful devotion and confidence in God, who, in anticipation of the heavenly reward of his fidelity, suffered the shameful death on the cross without murmuring, and has now entered upon his promised glory and dominion. Fix your attention upon him who experienced such opposition from wicked men that it culminated in his death, and let his example inspire you to steadfastness and courage. The persecutions to which you have been subjected by your opponents have not yet resulted in martyrdom. Your sufferings are but salutary chastisements at the hand of God. Do you not recall the comforting word of Scripture which speaks of the discipline which, for their good, God administers to his beloved children? Your present afflictions are meant to serve as a divine chastening; God is treating you as sons, for where is there a son whom his father does not chasten?

The inspiration afforded by such heroic faith sustained by the self-sacrifice of Jesus (12 : 1-7)

If God did not discipline you by trial and suffering—as he did the faithful in Old Testament times—he would be treating your welfare with indifference, as if you were not his true children. We accorded respect and honor to our earthly fathers when they chastised us; shall we not much more reverence our spiritual Father and humbly accept his discipline? For how great is the difference! Our earthly

Suffering in Christ's service a wholesome divine discipline (12 : 8-13)

fathers trained us for a brief time according to their imperfect human judgment, but God is disciplining us for our true good, in order that we may be fitted for perfect fellowship with him. Now chastisement of every kind, while it continues, is not easy, but hard to bear; but, when it has been endured, it produces the blessed results of purity and peace in those who have been subjected to it. Such being the purpose and effect of your sufferings, away with all slackness and faintheartedness; keep straight, or in the path of the Christian life, so as to encourage those of your number who are wavering to turn to the right way and to move steadily forward toward the goal.

The Christian must avoid sensuality and worldliness and live a holy life (12 : 14-17)

Seek after peace with all men and moral purity, without which no one can share the blessedness of the Messianic kingdom. Beware of suffering any of your number to forfeit the Christian salvation by a sinful life; see to it that no wicked man be allowed to poison the life of your church. Be not led astray by any sensualist or worldly-minded man, such as Esau was, who bartered away the privileges of his birthright for a meal of meat. You are familiar with the story, how, afterward, when he wished to receive his inherited possession, it was refused him, for though with bitter tears of regret he sought the forfeited blessing, he did not succeed in causing his father Isaac to change his mind and restore it to him.

Contrast, now, the two dispensations! When you be-

came Christians you did not receive a revelation whose symbols are startling, sensible manifestations of God, which strike terror to the heart, like the dread phenomena which accompanied the giving of the law on Sinai, but you came to the knowledge of the spiritual and eternal realities, the heavenly city of God, the numberless company of his people on earth and in heaven ; you came into the immediate presence of God, the final judge, and under the cleansing power of Christ's blood, which speaks of the divine forgiveness for sin—unlike that of Abel, which calls for vengeance. Beware of disobedience to this fullest and final revelation of God, for if they were severely punished who disregarded the outward, visible manifestation of God, how much more severe will be the penalty of those who disregard the heavenly message which he has now sent us through his Son; for that earlier voice by which he spoke on Sinai was, indeed, terrible, causing the earth to tremble; but Scripture speaks of a yet more terrific shaking which shall test the permanence of all things. And what does this reference to a final testing mean if not that everything temporary is to be destroyed, in order that the world of abiding, heavenly realities may appear. Now, since we Christians have been made sharers in this heavenly and permanent order, let us be grateful to God and serve him with reverent awe; for our God is severe as well as gracious.

The law inspires awe and fear; the gospel confidence and joy (12 : 18-24)

Neglect of the gospel more perilous than disobedience to the law (12 : 25-29)

Continue to cultivate brotherly love. Do not neglect to

Instructions in Christian life and duty (13 : 1-8)

be hospitable to strangers, for we remember how some, in ancient times, were surprised to find that they were honored by angel visitants. Minister to your fellow-believers who are in prison, and sympathize with the persecuted, remembering that you are liable to incur the same treatment. The marriage-bond must be held sacred and inviolable, for at the judgment God will punish those who desecrate it. Avoid covetousness and cultivate contentment, for God has assured his people of his presence and help, so that we can joyfully exclaim with the Psalmist: "I will securely trust in God, my keeper; man cannot harm me." Think of your deceased teachers and leaders, and, contemplating their martyr-death, emulate their Christian fidelity. Christ, who sustained and strengthened them, will equally aid us, and all his followers, now and always. Be not seduced by false teaching from your loyalty to Christ, but stand firm in the grace of God bestowed in the gospel, for we have no more to do with the profitless sacrificial feasts of the old covenant. We Christians partake of the saving benefits of Christ's death on the cross, from which the Jewish priests and people are excluded. Now we know that in the Jewish system the bodies of the animals which were offered in sacrifice on the great day of atonement were burned outside the camp; neither the priests, nor any others could partake of their flesh. In like manner the antitypical sacrifice of Christ was offered outside the gate of the holy city, and

Salvation is through Christ and not through the rites of Judaism (13 : 9-14)

so was freed from all association with Judaism. None may obtain part in the benefit of his sacrifice who still adheres to Judaism ; let us therefore cease to seek salvation within its bounds and betake ourselves to Christ, undisturbed by the disgrace which, in the eyes of the unbelieving Jews, we shall thereby incur. For we Christians do not associate our worship and salvation with the earthly city of Jerusalem, but with the heavenly and abiding city of God. Through Christ, then, and not through Jewish rites, let us offer a pure spiritual sacrifice of praise and confession. And let us not neglect to do deeds of kindness and generosity, for they are an offering acceptable to God. Render all due respect and obedience to your church officers, for they are eagerly seeking your salvation in a sense of their responsibility to God. By such submission you will enable them, in exercising their care over you, to rejoice in your docility, instead of grieving over your obstinacy, for surely conduct which would grieve your superiors could bring you no advantage.

Exhortation to kindness and obedience (13 : 15-17)

Let me be remembered in your prayers, for I trust that in my teaching I have pursued a course in all respects sincere and honorable. And I beg this interest in your prayers the more earnestly, in the hope that, in answer to them, I may the sooner be enabled to return to you.

A request for his readers' prayers (13 : 18, 19)

And may God, the author of peace, who raised up from the dead our Lord Jesus, who has become the Saviour of his people by virtue of his death, which seals the new cov-

His prayer for them (13 : 20, 21)

enant, perfectly equip you to serve him by richly blessing you with his grace in Christ, to whom be everlasting praise. Amen.

A final exhortation to faithfulness (13 : 22, 23)

I beg you, brethren, to heed my appeal to you to stand fast in your allegiance to Christ; for considering the greatness of the subject, I have presented it all too briefly. Let me inform you that our fellow-believer, Timothy, has been released from prison; if he comes here before I leave, I will bring him with me on my visit to you.

Concluding greeting and benediction (13 : 24, 25)

Give my greetings to all your church officers and to all your fellow-believers. The Italian Christians here send their salutations. God's blessing be with you all. Amen.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

I

THE RELATION OF THIS EPISTLE TO THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The resemblances in language and thought between this epistle and the Gospel of John clearly show that the two books emanated from the same writer. A large number of characteristic ideas and expressions are common to both, such as: "God is light;" "being born of God;" "to do the truth," "to be of God;" "to be of the truth," or, "of the world;" "to walk in the light," or, "in darkness." The epistle has the same mystical tone and elevated spirituality which characterize the Fourth Gospel. Along with that Gospel it constitutes the chief source for the study of an extremely interesting type of Christian thought and teaching in the early Church. The leading peculiarities of this Johannine type of doctrine are: (1) The viewing of all things from the stand-point of eternity. Revelation and redemption are expressions of God's eternal nature, and Christ is the heavenly light which has ever been shining down into the hearts of men. (2) A com-

prehensive view of all Christian virtues and duties. They are all summed up in love, which is the principle of moral perfection, the very nature of God himself. (3) A deep mystical vein. The Christian life is fellowship with God. Christ is "the Life," and to know him is salvation. (4) A very simple but profound philosophy of Christian progress. Obedience is the way of spiritual knowledge. To do Christ's commands, to walk in the truth—such are the apostle's watchwords.

II

GENERAL CHARACTER AND DESTINATION OF THE EPISTLE

Like the Epistle of James, the book under consideration has the appearance of a treatise quite as much as that of a letter. This is doubtless due to the fact that it was written for a wide and somewhat indefinite circle of readers. It was probably designed for the Christians of proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. There was a widely attested tradition current in the second century to the effect that the apostle John spent the closing years of his life in Ephesus and was the leading spirit in a school of Christian teaching which had its centre there. This tradition is illustrated by the statement of Irenæus: "The church of Ephesus was founded by Paul and had

John remaining permanently among them until the time of Trajan."

Assuming the correctness of this tradition, the churches for which the epistle was designed would be mainly Gentile-Christian. With this would agree the facts that we find no quotations from the Old Testament in the epistle and that the heresies against which the readers are warned are such as would arise on the soil of heathen philosophy. No mention is made of persecution, as in James and First Peter. Perhaps the persecution of the Christians by Domitian (81-96) was past, and that of Trajan (98-117) had not yet begun. On this supposition the epistle would have been written about 96-98, and this is about the time to which the epistle is usually assigned. All the indications of tradition point to Ephesus as the place of its composition.

III

THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

The Gospel of John is declared to have been written "that ye [the readers] may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20 : 31). The aim of the First Epistle may best be seen in such passages as 1 : 3, 4 : "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye

also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled," and 5 : 13: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." Thus it appears that the primary aim of the Gospel is to induce faith in Christ; that of the Epistle to foster it in those who have believed.

But the Epistle has also a more special object. It is to refute the error which is spoken of as "antichrist"—the denial that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (2 : 22). This denial arose from certain views concerning the corruptness of matter, and the remoteness of the divine from the human, which were current in heathen speculation. These notions, which would prove so destructive of belief in the incarnation, had either invaded, or were in danger of invading, the churches, and the apostle points out the perils to which the believers were exposed in consequence of them (2 : 18 ff.; 4 : 1 ff.; 5 : 6, 16, 17). But despite this warning against false teaching, the tone of the epistle is not chiefly polemic or denunciatory, but gentle, constructive, and confirmatory of faith. Love is its key-note, and its great underlying idea is that of communion with God and with Jesus Christ his Son, who has perfectly revealed God in terms of human life and action.

IV

THE FIRST MESSAGE OF JOHN

1. *The Messenger of Life* (1 : 1-4)

I write of that divine Messenger of life whom we heard and saw and touched in his earthly manifestation; for he, the Bearer of salvation, came forth from God and appeared in human form, so that in speaking of him we are but testifying to what we have learned from our association with him when on earth. We are testifying out of our personal experience in order that we may fully share with you the knowledge of our common Saviour, for it was won in communion with God and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing to you concerning God's revelation in Christ, that by your full participation with us in that knowledge we may share in larger measure the believer's happiness in making Christ known.

The apostle's personal knowledge of Jesus, the Christ (1 : 1, 2)

His desire to make it real to others (1 : 3, 4)

2. *The Message of Life* (1 : 5-10)

Now the substance of the heavenly message which Christ has brought to us is that God is the pure Source of all good. Everything that is evil is contrary to his nature. If, therefore, we commit sin, we forfeit our fellowship with him, but if we live and act purely, we shall have the friendship of God and happy relations with one another,

The possibility of fellowship with God and of purification from sin through Christ (1 : 5-7)

and we shall be more and more purified by the redeeming work of Christ from the evil which still clings to us. None of us can honestly deny that he does still commit sins; but we know that if we acknowledge our sins before God he will be true to his promises and to his own gracious nature, and will freely pardon us and purify our hearts from evil. But if, on the contrary, we try to cloak and deny our sinfulness, we thereby show our perverseness and doubt of God's word.

This purification a necessity for everyone (1 : 8-10)

3. *The Gospel Rule of Life* (2 : 1-11)

The true test of a Christian profession (2 : 1-6)

I am writing you, my dear disciples, in the hope of showing you more plainly the way of holiness; but when any one of you does fall into sin, let him remember that we have one to plead our cause before God, even our holy Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has died to save us from sin; and not to save us only, but to save all men. Now the test of discipleship to him is the doing of what he commands; if, therefore, anyone claims fellowship with him and yet disobeys his word, that is proof that his profession is false; but those who obey his precepts, thereby show that they are sincerely consecrated to God. This, then, is the test of fellowship with Christ. He who lays claim to such fellowship must live the life of Christ-like purity and service.

This rule of life which I am setting before you is no novelty, it is but the requirement of the gospel which was

taught you at your conversion. And, yet, the Christian law is ever taking on new meaning and shining in new light. It is the law which reigned in the life of Jesus and which must rule in our lives; for we Christians have emerged from the life of sin and error into the knowledge of God's truth and love. To his law of purity and love we must be obedient if we are to be Christ's disciples. Hatred toward one's fellows is the practical denial of that law. This, I say, is the test; brotherly love is the proof that we are living in obedience to God's requirements. Hatred, on the contrary, is the proof that we do not truly know God, and that we are living in perverse disregard of his holy will.

The law of love is at once new and old (2 : 7, 8)

The spirit of love the evidence of Christian discipleship (2 : 9-11)

4. *An Appeal to Young and Old to Seek the Higher Divine Life* (2 : 12-17)

I am writing to you, my spiritual children, in order that you who have tasted God's forgiving love in Christ, may know the way of salvation more perfectly. I am writing to you who are older to deepen in you the knowledge of your divine Saviour. To you younger believers I am writing to encourage you in your manly conflict against evil. To young and old alike I have written in order to confirm you in Christian knowledge and virtue. And this is the substance of my instruction: Set not your hearts on this wicked, perishable world; for all its beauty, pomp, and pleasure are as fleeting as a fading flower. Build, there-

Obedience to God the one supreme virtue (2 : 12-17)

fore, your hopes on God, for those who commit themselves to him are secure amid all life's changes.

5. *A Warning against the Denial of Christ* (2 : 18-29)

Desertions from the brotherhood not unexpected (2 : 18)

You have already been taught, my children, that the day of the Lord's coming shall be preceded by the outbreak of hostility to his truth and kingdom; those who embody such opposition have already appeared, and from this we may know that the day of his advent is near.

Their apostasy dangerous and destructive (2 : 19-23)

These foes of Christ left our Christian fellowship because they were not in real sympathy with us; had they been so, they would have remained in the church, but their departure only showed that they were not true Christians. Now you have received enlightenment from God, and you know full well what the Christian life is and requires. I am not writing to tell you this, for you know perfectly the difference between truth and falsehood. What is so false as the denial of the real Messiahship of Jesus? This is the very essence of anti-Christian unbelief.

The true Christian must be absolutely loyal to Christ (2 : 24-29)

The denial of Christ is equally the denial of God, who has attested Christ as his Son. The former denial carries with it the latter. Yield no place to this anti-Christian spirit. Hold fast the truth which was taught you from the first. Persevere in your confession of both the Son and the Father. By clinging to Christ, as well as by believing in God, you shall realize the promise of eternal

life. My warnings are intended to put you on your guard against these deniers of Christ. I am confident that the divine presence and teaching will secure you against being shaken from your steadfast adherence to him. Let us be true to him, that, when he comes in majesty, we may have no occasion, by reason of our unfaithfulness, to tremble before him in fear and dread. You know that he is worthy of all confidence; be assured, then, that in living the life of fellowship with him, you may claim the full rights of children of God.

6. *The Nature and Goal of the Christ-like Life* (3 : 1-12)

The meaning and requirements of sonship to God (3 : 1-6)

How wonderful a love God has shown us in calling us into the life of fellowship and likeness to himself. This is why we find no favor in the eyes of the wicked world, for the world is estranged from God. Already we are members of the household of God; and yet we are far from the full realization of our Christian calling; but when Christ shall return, then shall we see him with unclouded vision and be transformed into his likeness. Now everyone whose life is inspired by the purpose of becoming like Christ, strives after the perfection of his great example. The sinful life means defiance to the holy will of God, and it was the object of Christ's coming to destroy the power of sin. He, therefore, who claims fellowship with the sinless Saviour, must forsake the sinful life; for such a life is contrary to the very nature and re-

Deeds of sin are conclusive evidence that the sinner is not a child of God (3 : 7-12)

quirements of discipleship to Christ. Let there be no mistake on this point; he is acceptable to God who lives a holy, Christ-like life; the habitual sinner, on the contrary, shows by his deeds his likeness to Satan, whose nature it is to sin. It is the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world to destroy Satan's dominion. The true child of God does not live the sinful life, because the germ of a new character has been implanted in him; indeed, he cannot live such a life, since it would be the contradiction of his sonship to God. Here, then, is the test by which we may distinguish those who are morally akin to God and those who are kindred to Satan: Those who do not live the life of purity and love are not God's children. The duty of love is the burden of the gospel which has been taught you since you became Christians. Its opposite is seen in the murderous hate of Cain, whose deed sprang from his wicked hostility to the goodness which he saw in his brother.

7. *Love the Crowning Characteristic of this Life* (3 : 13-24)

The contrast between love and hate (3 : 13-15)

Such being the nature of the Christian life, it is no wonder that you find yourselves in disfavor with the world. The very proof that you have broken with the wicked world, the realm of moral death, is that you love one another; for love is the essence of goodness. On the contrary, hate is the principle which spreads death through

the world, and thus we meet again in love, and hate the contrasted, antagonistic forces of life and death. How, now, shall we learn the meaning of love? Look upon Christ and see him giving his life for his fellows; there we see love's supreme exemplification; his life of sacrifice and service is the pattern for us. On the contrary, the loveless life would be seen in one who possessed the means and the opportunity of helping and serving those in need and yet refused to do so. Let our love be no mere profession, but an active principle leading to good deeds. If our love is thus sincere and helpful, we may know that we belong to God, and when our consciences condemn us for our faults, we may still be confident of God's favor, because he who takes account of our right desire and intention, is more compassionate toward his true children than they are toward themselves. But most happy are we if we give our consciences no occasion to accuse us. Then we may rejoice in all the fulness of God's grace, because we are living in accord with his holy will. And what is it to do what he requires? What but this: to live the life of Christ-like love? To do that is to be in blessed fellowship with God, and the consciousness of this fellowship he gives through the presence of his Spirit in our hearts.

The real meaning of love revealed by Christ (3 : 16-18)

The assurance which springs out of love (3 : 19-24)

8. *The Anti-Christian Spirit* (4 : 1-6)

The test of true and false teaching (4 : 1-3)

Do not credulously follow everyone who offers to teach you, but apply to all the test by which you may know whether they are really teachers of divine truth or not (for the world is full of pretenders to a divine mission). Now, this is the test by which you may know the true from the false: Those who acknowledge the incarnation of Jesus are true; those who deny this are false. This spirit of denial is the essence of that hostility to Christ which you have been told would manifest itself, and which has, indeed, already appeared. You are God's true children and have resisted the influence of these false guides; for the power that works in you is mightier than that which prevails in the wicked world. The false teachers embody the spirit of this evil world and therefore find in it the sphere of their work and influence. But we belong to another order; ours is the message of God's truth, and this message must find its acceptance among those who are morally kindred to God; the wicked world will not receive our teaching. Here, then, is the test by which we may distinguish the true teaching from the false.

True children of God heed only his message of truth (4 : 4-6)

9. *The Supremacy of Love* (4 : 7-21)

Love the essence of religion (4 : 7-13)

Brotherly love is the motto of our religion, for love is a divine principle. Those whose lives are ruled by love are God's true children. Those, on the contrary, who reject

this principle cannot be living in fellowship with God, since love is the very essence of God's moral nature. Now the supreme revelation of God's love is seen in his sending his only Son into the world for our salvation. The greatness of this love appears in the fact that God loved us, although we did not love him, and sent his Son to save us from our sins. In this free and undeserved love of God what a motive should we find to the love of one another! Although God is invisible to our outward eyes, if love is the motive of our life he is spiritually present in us and reproduces his own nature in us. It is by this test of growing likeness to God that we know ourselves as living in vital fellowship with him. Now this supreme proof of God's love, the sending of his Son to save us, we have known in our own experience. To acknowledge and accept this gift of God is to enter into the life of communion with him. This gift we believers have received and appropriated. It is the self-revelation of him whose nature is love; therefore to live the life of love is to live in blessed and perfect union with God. When we thus share in the God-like life of love we have no more fear of the divine judgment because we know that we are living our life in harmony with God's nature and requirements. I say that love is the best cure for fear. When one loves he need not dread the penalties of God's law, for to do so would show that he had not really entered into the God-like life of love. Our love to God is the answer of our hearts to the free and undeserved love

The coming of Christ the supreme example of love (4 : 14-16)

Love casts out fear (4 : 17-19)

Love to God and love to man are inseparable (4 : 20, 21)

which God has shown to us. Love to God also carries with it love to man. The pretence to love God when one hates his fellow-men is false; for who could rise to the height of loving the invisible God who cannot even love his fellow-men among whom he daily lives? You see, therefore, that the gospel requirement that we should love God includes also the duty of love to our fellow-men.

10. *Jesus Christ the Way to God* (5 : 1-12)

Faith in Jesus as Saviour is the secret of the Christian's victory over the world (5 : 1-6)

We become children of God through the acceptance of Christ as Messiah and Saviour, and love to God the Father carries with it love to all his children. If we truly love God and obey his will we may be assured that we shall also love our brethren. The proof of love to God is the doing of his requirements, and they are not irksome when love rules the heart. Those who are in spiritual union with God resist the power of the evil world, and the inspiring motive in their successful conflict with sin is their faith. Whom do we see winning the victory over sin if not those who are trusting in Jesus as their Saviour? He

The threefold testimony which God has borne to his Son (5 : 7-9)

was, and remained throughout his life on earth, the truly Anointed of God; not alone at his baptism, but also in and through his death, did God's Spirit attest his divine mission. This divine attestation of the Sonship of Christ is that which proves him to be the Messiah and Saviour, and this witness is threefold: the bestowment of the Spirit upon him, the heavenly voice at his baptism, and

the divine favor and presence in his death; and all these conspire to prove the same thing: the reality and divineness of his saving mission. Now, if we are ready to accept the testimony of men, how much more ready should we be to receive the testimony by which God himself has proclaimed Jesus Christ to be his Son and our Saviour. He who accepts Christ rests upon this strong divine assurance, while he who refuses him rejects the plain word of God because he rejects the testimony by which God has attested Jesus as his Son. Now this is the substance of the divine testimony: God has brought to men eternal life in his Son; to receive the Son is to receive the life which he brings; to reject the Son is to reject the life of which he is the Bearer.

This testimony unsurpassed in value (5 : 9-12)

11. *The Christian's firm Assurance* (5 : 13-21)

I am writing to you, my Christian brethren, to confirm you in the assurance of your salvation through Christ. We may have all confidence that God hears our prayers and that he will give us all things which are in accord with his gracious purpose for our salvation. If, for example, any one of you sees a brother halting and stumbling in the Christian course, he may confidently ask God's help in his effort to save the erring one from his faults; but there is a contemptuous rejection of Christ concerning which I dare not express myself so hopefully. All failure to do God's will is, of course, sinful, but the prospect of recov-

The Christian's reasonable confidence in prayer (5 : 13-17)

ery is much greater in the case of some sins than in that of others.

The believer's security in Christ (5 : 18-21)

Now in the nature of the case the true child of God cannot live a sinful life, for his Saviour keeps him secure from the assaults of Satan. We Christians are conscious of the friendship of God and of the enmity of the wicked world. We also know that to us God has revealed himself in Christ and that through him we have a saving knowledge of the Father. To us the blessed realities of God's life and love have been disclosed in Christ; to receive them is salvation. My dear disciples, be prompt to reject all counterfeits which are offered you in their stead.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

I

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE LETTER

After a partial and somewhat doubtful recognition this epistle was definitely adopted into the canon by the councils of Laodicea and Carthage in the fourth century. Objection has been made to its apostolic authorship on the ground of the severe and intolerant language of verses 10 and 11, and because the author calls himself the elder or presbyter (*v.* 1). On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine any motive for the forging of this brief personal letter, and it is unnatural to suppose that a forger would have called himself the presbyter and not the apostle. Moreover, the epistle shows not a few points of resemblance to First John in style and contents. Some have referred the letter to the somewhat dim and doubtful personality called "John the presbyter" in early church tradition, but this view is not especially favored by verse 1, since it appears that in the early church the apostles were

sometimes called elders (1 Pet. 5 : 1) and there is no reason why the apostle John may not have designated himself by that title.

II

THE PERSON ADDRESSED

To whom is this epistle addressed? The words of the address (*v.* 1), rendered in our English versions: "unto the elect lady and her children,"[1] are capable of two general meanings, and the second of these may be expressed in any one of three different translations. The first interpretation is that some church (personified) is addressed; compare 1 Peter 5 : 13, where "she that is in Babylon, elect together with you," is supposed by many to refer to the church in Babylon (or Rome). The other interpretation applies the phrase to an individual. But who is the person? Three answers are possible. (1) "To the lady Electa;" (2) "To the elect Curia;" (3) "To the elect, that is, Christian, lady" (unnamed). Against the view that a church is addressed is the analogy of Third John, *v.* 1, where a person is named, and the fact that the epistle proceeds as if written to a person. The order of the words is unfavorable to the supposition that a woman

[1] The Greek is: ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς.

named either Electa or Curia is addressed. The most natural meaning of the word is that given in our English versions—"to the Christian lady"—but they give us no intimation as to who the "elect lady" was.

III

THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

The primary object of the letter is indicated in *v.* 4: "I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father." The apostle seems to have met with some of the children of the lady addressed, perhaps at Ephesus, and he wrote this letter to the mother and the children to express his joy at their Christian devotion. But there was a secondary object in writing, namely, to warn the family against the anti-Christian denial that Jesus is come in the flesh (*vv.* 7-11). We note in this brief letter the same interplay of tender instruction and encouragement in the life of love and of impassioned warning against the denial of Christ which characterize the First Epistle.

The writer promises, if possible, to visit the family addressed (*v.* 12), and closes by sending the greetings of the "elect lady's" sister (*v.* 13).

IV

THE SECOND MESSAGE OF JOHN

1. *Salutation* (1-3)

The writer's greetings and good wishes (1-3)

I who am an elder in the church write to you, Christian lady, and to you, her beloved children; and with me all our fellow-believers unite in sending you this message for your encouragement and comfort in the knowledge and experience of the everlasting gospel. May the rich blessing of the Father and of the Son, Jesus Christ, abide with us.

2. *The True and the False Way* (4-11)

The law of love again commended (4-7)

The obedient and faithful Christian life of some of your children has given me great joy. Now I wish to commend to you all that same rule of life in which we have been instructed since our conversion, that is, the law of mutual love. This love consists in obeying God's requirements, and this maxim has been the central truth in all our Christian teaching. The need of emphasizing it is all the greater now that many false teachers have appeared who deny the incarnation and Messiahship of Jesus. This denial is the essence of hostility to Christ and his truth. Beware of being deprived of your Christian confidence and hope by the pernicious work of these men. For those who renounce Jesus Christ and his gospel, thereby

A warning against the denial of Christ (7-11)

refuse the true and saving knowledge of God; but those who cleave to that gospel, possess the knowledge of the Father and of the Son through whom he has revealed himself. Abstain from all relations with those who are seeking to win you from Christ to a doctrine which is subversive of his truth, for to have social fellowship with such men is to encourage them in their evil deeds.

3. *Concluding Greeting* (12, 13)

The writer hopes to visit his readers (12, 13)

I have much which I should like to say to you, but I will write no more, for erelong I hope to visit you and to confirm you further in the peace and hope of the gospel. The children of your Christian sister send their greetings.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

I

THE OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

This epistle is closely like Second John in style and ideas. Both are written by "the elder" to the persons whom he "loves in truth" (*v.* 1). The conclusions of the two letters are especially similar.

The person, Gaius, addressed in this epistle, is otherwise unknown to us. He seems to have been a layman of position and influence whom John commends for his hospitality and charity.

The occasion and design of the letter appear to have been as follows: The apostle had sent out certain brethren, evangelists, who had visited the church to which Gaius belonged. They had brought with them a letter of commendation from the apostle. In the church in question there was a man named Diotrephes (*v.* 9), who proudly rejected the letter and the authority of its author, and sought to prevent the reception of the messengers. But Gaius welcomed them, furnished them hospitality, and set them forward on their way. The evangelists, on re-

turning (to Ephesus), reported the conduct of Diotrephes and of Gaius. This report was the occasion of the letter. Toward its close (*v.* 12) Demetrius, perhaps the bearer of the epistle, is commended.

The epistle thus unites commendation of Gaius and Demetrius with censure of Diotrephes. Like the other epistles of John, it combines gentleness and severity. It has a more definite and specific occasion than Second John, and thus exhibits a somewhat more vivid and life-like character.

II

THE INTEREST AND VALUE OF THE MINOR EPISTLES OF JOHN

Although these two minor epistles have no special doctrinal importance, it is a matter of no small interest that we have preserved to us two private letters of the apostle John. Like the Epistle to Philemon, these letters give us a glimpse of the writer in his personal relations, as well as furnish us a vivid picture of the conditions and difficulties of Christian work in the apostolic age. Says Dr. Gloag: "We have in these two epistles of John a glimpse of the state of the apostolic churches, the mixed character of the churches, the prevalence of heretical

teaching, the institution of travelling evangelists, and the occasional resistance even to apostolic authority."

III

THE THIRD MESSAGE OF JOHN

1. *Salutation* (1-4)

The writer wishes Gaius temporal and spiritual prosperity (1-4)

I, an elder among the believers, send my greetings to my dearly beloved Gaius. May God, who has so richly prospered you in your spiritual life, grant you a full measure of all temporal blessing. It was a great joy for me to hear from some of our fellow-believers of your fidelity in Christian life and duty. I can have no greater pleasure than that which comes from knowing that my disciples are loyal to Christ.

2. *Counsels and Warnings* (5-12)

Commendation of Gaius's treatment of certain messengers (5-8)

I cordially commend your kind and generous treatment of the Christian brethren who have visited you. They speak gratefully to their fellow-believers of your benevolence. It is truly a good work to help them forward on their Christian mission, for they have given themselves to their work with true Christian devotion, forgetful of all personal reward. Such servants of Christ should receive our encouragement that we may thus have a part in their work.

The contrast of a bad and a good example (9-12)

I have previously given the church some counsel, but Diotrephes, in his self-seeking ambition, set my advice at naught. When I visit you I will bring up for consideration his wicked and contemptuous conduct, for not only did he refuse my counsel, but he opposed the work of the messengers and sought to discredit them before the brotherhood. My brother, shun such an evil example and continue your labor of love. To help and to serve is God-like; but to harm one's brethren is proof that one knows not God. Demetrius is an example of well-doing which is acknowledged by all. I need not assure you of his true devotion.

3. *Concluding Greeting* (13, 14)

Closing good wishes (13, 14)

Since I have so much that I wish to say to you I will not now write more but will wait till I see you, as I hope to do shortly, when we can speak together freely. God's blessing be with you. The friends here send greetings. My salutation to each of the brethren.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

One of the most instructive popular treatises on the portions of the New Testament which are included in this volume is Dean Farrar's "Early Days of Christianity" (various editions). The student may also consult with profit such works as Dr. Hort's "Judaistic Christianity," 1894 (Macmillan), De Pressensé's "Apostolic Age," 1890 (Hodder & Stoughton), Bartlet's "Apostolic Age," 1900 (Scribner and T. & T. Clark), Purves' "Christianity in the Apostolic Age," 1900 (Scribner), and Lechler's very thorough work (2 vols.), entitled, "The Apostolic and Post-apostolic Age," 1886 (T. & T. Clark).

Among the more popular commentaries some of the most scholarly and useful are: "The Popular Commentary," edited by Dr. Schaff (Scribner), "The Expositor's Bible," (Armstrong), and "The Cambridge Bible for Schools" (Cambridge University Press). In "The Expositor's Bible" I would especially commend Dr. Plummer's commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistles of James and Jude, Dr. Lumby's on the Epistles of Peter, and Dr. Edwards's on Hebrews. In "The Cambridge Bible" some of the best are those of Dean Plumptre on James, Peter, and Jude; of Dean Farrar on Hebrews, and of Dr. Plummer on the Epistles of John.

Appendix

The two small volumes by Professor Lindsay on the Acts of the Apostles in the series called "Hand-books for Bible Classes" (T. & T. Clark), will be found very useful, as will the excellent exposition of Hebrews by Professor A. B. Davidson in the same series.

The doctrinal significance of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been discussed in treatises by Professor A. B. Bruce and by the Rev. George Milligan, 1899 (T. & T. Clark), and that of the Epistles of John by Professor George B. Stevens in "The Johannine Theology," 1896 (Scribner). The theology both of Hebrews and of the General Epistles is fully set forth in the "Theologies of the New Testament" by Weiss, 1882–83 (T. & T. Clark), Beyschlag, last edition, 1899 (T. & T. Clark), and Stevens, 1899 (Scribner and T. & T. Clark).

Those who wish to read more elaborate discussions of questions of introduction than are furnished in this volume will find them in Farrar's "Messages of the Books," 1885 (E. P. Dutton & Co.), or in Gloag's "Introduction to the Catholic Epistles," 1887 (T. & T. Clark), and in the "Introductions to the New Testament" by Weiss, 1887–88 (Funk & Wagnalls), Salmon, last edition, 1891 (Murray), and Bacon, 1900 (Macmillan).

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